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THE

EXILE FROM EDEN;

MEDITATIONS

ON THE THIRD CHAPTER OF GENESIS,

WITH

EXEGETICAL DEVELOPMENTS.

By L. BONNET,

AUTHOR OF

"THE FAMILY OF BETHANY."

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY THE REV. W. HARE.

LONDON:

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THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

If Calvin, the most learned and the most lucid commentator of the Reformation, approaches the third chapter of Genesis with a kind of diffidence, acknowledging that "here a multitude of the most difficult questions present themselves to us," it may appear presumptuous in me to have chosen it as the subject of these Meditations. But, deeply convinced of the paramount importance of this portion of the sacred volume, it is just because it is difficult that I have attempted to derive from it, for studious Christians, some of the instructions which it was designed to communicate. Struck with the

little use that is generally made of a chapter which unfolds, in a few verses, all the mysteries of man's present state, the origin of evil, the basis and the condition of all the successive revelations of God, and the key of redemption, I have been led to conclude, that the cause of the neglect with which it is treated, arose from the difficulties which it presents to those readers who, though anxious to know the whole counsel of God, as revealed in His Word, have neither the time nor the resources necessary for making researches into this ancient document of our human woes. On this basis, as on many others in the field of biblical study, there remains an entire edifice to be erected. To the construction of this edifice I have wished to bring my stone, however insignificant and obscure may be the place which shall be assigned to it I have wished to point out a rich quarry, and to invite my brethren to draw upon it for materials.

It would have been easy, perhaps, to have selected a more interesting subject, and one which would have afforded a wider scope for

the flight of oratory; but my object was not to publish occasional discourses. I offer these Meditations to the religious public as I presented them, (with very few corrections,) to the congregation among whom I was called to *expound the Word of God;* for such appears to me to be the great object of preaching. A work of prayer in the preparation, the preaching, and the publication of it, I now leave it in the hands of Him, without whose blessing, all, even religious works, remain barren and dead.

Those who, in reading these pages, shall find themselves unable to agree with me in all the opinions which are expressed in them, are requested to suspend their judgment, until they have read the explanations which I have placed at the end of the volume.—These, presenting proofs which could not easily have been introduced into the Meditations themselves, will serve, in more cases than one, to justify my views. To render these exegetical explanations accessible to all kinds of readers, I have placed the philosophical remarks and quotations in foreign

languages, in notes at the foot of the page, or where this was not possible, I have given in a parenthesis, a translation of the words of the original text, which I had occasion to cite.

London, June, 1834.

THE

EXILE FROM EDEN.

MEDITATION I.

THE IMAGE OF GOD.

GEN. I. 26.

"And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

A TRADITION exists in almost every nation upon earth, of which the poets have availed themselves to present to the human imagination, wearied with the evils of life, the beautiful and attractive images of an age in which the most perfect happiness reigned, combined with unsullied innocence. Man, it is said, at that time free from the bondage of his passions and from all restraint, and ignorant of the art of war, lived in peace, without laws and without judges, happy in the midst of an eternal spring, and in the enjoyment of the rich

gifts which the earth yielded him in abundance, without culture or labour. Alas! it is but too natural for thinking beings, imaginations weighed down by the innumerable sorrows and afflictions incident to human nature, creatures that are ignorant of the mystery of their existence, and have forgotten their origin and their destination, thus to rush into an ideal world, that they may escape, even but for a moment, a heart-rending reality!

But had this idea, the fable of a golden age, never any existence, except in the imagination of the poet, or in a few souls thirsting after happiness, which they considered lost for ever? And does this interesting question meet with no solution in that book which contains the key to the history of man, to his origin and his destinies?

Yes, my brethren, the Bible also has its golden age; and here it is no fable; it is a reality. Here we are, in a manner, present at the council of Him, who, "in the beginning, created the heavens and the earth;" we are witnesses of the astonishing spectacle of a universe springing up into existence out of nothing, at the voice of the Eternal. "God says: Let there be light, and there is light."

The earth, made fruitful by the breath of the Lord, is clothed with verdure; Lebanon waves its majestic cedars, and the blade of grass shades with a thousand colours the depths of the valley. A thousand different flowers display, in the fields of Eden, the brightness of their hues, and spread abroad the balm of their perfume; a thousand delicious fruits are ready for the nourishment of man, who is about to be created, and of the other creatures which have already been called into being. The bird of the air, happy in its existence, warbles its Creator's praise; the beasts of the field wait upon their lord, in whom they have not yet learned to see an enemy. The mighty deep has received into its bosom the tumultuous waters, to which the Almighty has assigned the limits where their proud waves shall be stayed. Even in the lowest recesses of the vast ocean, innumerable living creatures spread animation and life. Radiant luminaries, hung out from the firmament, sparkling with stars, promise the earth warmth and fertility as well as light. The majestic temple is finished; and nothing is now wanting to it but the being by pre-eminence, who is to be, as it were, its

divinity, to whom every thing evidently has reference, and who, in his turn, is to refer every thing to the eternal glory of his Creator. Here the historian of the universe changes his method of narrating; he is not satisfied with merely showing us a last creature coming into existence at the command of the Eternal. He stops, and contemplates the Creator entering into solemn deliberation with himself, at the moment of His giving being to the lord of this lower world. "And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it was brought to pass; and thus we behold man surrounded with all the pleasures of Eden, where every thing breathed life and happiness; man, the lord of the earth, enriched with all the beauties and perfections of the divine image; man, and the companion whom God had given him, that they might admire together the wonders of creation; that with one heart, and one mouth,

they might bless the goodness of their God, and make Eden resound with the song of glory and of praise.

O my God! do Thou enlighten our minds, that we may know our origin! Present before our hearts the bright portrait of Thine own image, which shone forth in the soul of man, when he issued from Thy creating hand. And since, in Thine infinite mercy, Thou hast not left the evil without a remedy; the ruin without hope; oh! do Thou kindle in our hearts a sincere desire to regain Thy lost likeness!

Wherein can the image of God, in a finite creature, consist? Such is the question which shall occupy us this day.

To this question some answer, that the image of God consisted in the superiority of man's physical faculties, in the admirable conformation of his *body*. This answer is unworthy of our text and God. Is God a material being? Has He a body, in the image of which He could create man? Others, on hearing the question, answer, that the image of God in man consisted in the *dominion* which was given him over all created beings. But can this be the whole of God's image? In this

case man has not lost it, since he still rules over the creatures which replenish the earth; with this difference, perhaps, that he makes them cruelly feel his tyrannical empire; and if this image has not been effaced in him, why should we be exhorted to recover it, as we shall presently see we are? Others, again, reply to our question, that the image of God consisted in the faculty of the *understanding*, with which man is endowed, and which so eminently distinguishes him from all other creatures. This answer is less remote from the truth, but it is incomplete. Assuredly we are ready to assign to the understanding a high rank among the noble endowments which constituted the image of God in man. But was this the only thing that rendered man like his Creator? Alas! do we not see in society, beings of a transcendent understanding, in every other respect, completely destitute of a resemblance to God? Have not the greatest criminals that have disgraced humanity frequently been remarkably distinguished for their mental endowments? Yea, are not the devils themselves intelligent and spiritual beings?

Let us allow Scripture to explain itself.

In the fifth chapter of Genesis, we find the two words, *image* and *likeness*, employed in a manner calculated to make us understand their meaning in our text. There it is said, that "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth." Now is it not evident, that these words ascribe to Seth all the qualities, *physical*, *intellectual*, and *moral*, which his father possessed? And can we, without doing violence to the grammar itself, restrain the meaning of these expressions in our text, to a certain superiority by which man is distinguished? We think, then, that we are authorized to extend these words to all that which constitutes the character of God, with all the restrictions which the *finite* nature of man requires. Man resembled his Creator with regard to his intellectual and moral qualities. Doubtless there are, in God, incommunicable perfections which belong to His eternal essence; and, indeed, it is for having arrogated to Himself these august perfections, that man unhappily excavated an abyss of woe beneath his feet. But there are in God moral perfections which He communicates to His creatures, endowed with an understanding to know, and

a heart to love. In this sense, man was a reflection, feeble, no doubt, and finite, of the Divinity himself. And will mere reason, a mere respect for the perfections of God, and the nature of His works, permit us to expect any thing but what is perfect from His creating hand? Who, on viewing a clumsy imitation of one of Raphael's virgins, ever thinks of ascribing it to the pencil of that great master? We may be mistaken; we may go too far in endeavouring to point out wherein the image of God in man consisted; but such an error, if it be one, would at least be worthy of God; while to pretend that He, who has impressed the seal of His adorable perfections upon every thing which He has created for His own glory, and for happiness, has allowed a moral being to come out of His hands, sinful and defiled, weak and unhappy, as man now is, would appear to us to border upon blasphemy!

But the revelations of God, which complete and elucidate one another, have not left us to conjecture upon this subject. If the inspired historian, who has disclosed to us the origin of creation, has not told us expressly wherein the image of God, in the first man, consisted, the Bible elsewhere exhorts us

to recover that image; and that we might not remain in ignorance respecting it, it has described it to us with great exactness. If you open the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians, (chap. iii. 9—18,) you will find these remarkable words: "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the IMAGE of *Him that created him!*" Upon these words we make two remarks, and propose two questions, which the Apostle has answered by anticipation. And first, there is, in us, something which God did not put into our nature when he created man, since we are here exhorted to put it off. And what is that? It is what the Apostle calls the *old man*, a metaphorical expression, which he explains himself, in a passage parallel to that which I have just quoted, where he thus expresses himself: "Put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Eph. iv. 22, 23. Is it, then, the understanding alone, that constitutes the image of God in us? Well, then, even that understanding must be "renewed," and changed. Are we,

then, what we have been? Evidently not. Now for our second remark, and then our second question, on this important passage. It follows, from the exhortation of the Apostle, that we must acquire something which we no longer have. And what is it? "The new man, renewed after the image of Him that created him." We have now come to the idea, and even the expression of Moses, in our text, which will be the more evident, if we remember that the Apostle made use of the Greek version of the Septuagint, from which he copies literally the words of our text, as they are there rendered. Thus the image of God must be reproduced in man; but wherein does it consist? First, the Apostle tells us, in a renewed understanding, in a new man. And for greater precision, and that nothing might be wanting to make the subject clear, he adds, in the passage cited, (Eph. iv. 24,) that this new man is "*created after God* (which again means after the image of God) in RIGHTEOUSNESS and TRUE HOLINESS." These words require no comment; here is the image of God in man.

But that we might be able still better to distinguish the traits of this image, God has

not contented Himself with merely giving us an exact description of them in the words which we have just considered. Read the gospels; there is developed before our eyes the life of one whom the Bible calls the second Adam, one who is designated *the image* of God, *the express image* (χαρακτερ) *of the person* (υποστασις) *of God, the image of the invisible God.** What divine traits does that image bear! What a reflection of the divine perfections! What wisdom! What love! What devotion! What holiness! There, my brethren, we clearly behold the being made "after God in righteousness and true holiness," of which the Apostle speaks.

Now see how the image of God in man develops itself in the idea of the inspired Apostle, and in the manifestation of the Son of God on earth. We too, place some traits of this image in the *understanding*. Not, indeed, in the understanding which requires to be "renewed in knowledge," because it has forgotten the things which are above, and has lost the knowledge of the name of its heavenly Father; but in the clear and

* 2 Cor. iv. 4; Heb. i. 3; Col. i. 15.

enlightened understanding of the first man, created after the image of God; a spiritual understanding, the reflection of the supreme intelligence, capable of rising to God, of seeking God, of adoring God in His works, and in all His moral perfections; an understanding without error and without darkness, possessing a full knowledge of the author of its being, and all the means of continually making new progress in that knowledge by experience. Now to know God is life eternal; it is the perfection of the understanding; it is the image of God. Such is the first feature of the Divine image, a feature which constituted the grandeur and the glory of the first man, that creature of love, unto whom the celestial intelligences themselves are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto him, and to lead him unto salvation!* Such is He, whose dignity and greatness the minstrel of Zion has celebrated upon his harp: "Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned Him with glory and honour; Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands."†

* Heb. ii. 14.

† Psalm viii. 7—9. comp. Gen. i. 26.

We do not, however, mean to represent man, created in the image of God, notwithstanding the superiority of his understanding, as a *savant*, in the ordinary meaning of that word, nor as a philosopher, or metaphysician: it was not by the way of reasoning that he arrived at the knowledge of things; he had no need of such a process. The superiority, even of his understanding, consisted, perhaps, chiefly in its simplicity, its ignorance of what is false, its inexperience of evil, in that practical ingenuousness, which constitutes the charm of the unsophisticated character of a child, a character which Jesus commands us to acquire anew. Always disposed to learn, never presuming upon itself, plying those around it with questions, listening to their answers with an entire confidence—such is the child in the arms of its father, such was Adam before his God, who condescended to instruct him, and whose word was never called in doubt. The Scripture confirms us in the idea, that this was, indeed an admirable feature of God's image, when it tells us, that "God made man upright, but that (afterwards, alas!) they sought out many inventions (reasonings)."*

* Eccles. vii. 29.

The Apostle Paul also countenances this opinion, when, in his tender solicitude for the Christians at Corinth, who were exposed to the sophistry of a false philosophy, he writes to them, with an evident allusion to the seduction of our first parents, "I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."* Finally, Jesus Christ also establishes it, when, showing us, in this humble and noble simplicity, this child-like candour, full of openness and confidence, a characteristic feature of the children of his kingdom, he addresses to his still presumptuous disciples this solemn declaration: "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."†

This feature of character leads us to another, which is inseparable from it. This simplicity in the mind supposes or produces simplicity in the heart. When an individual is straightforward in thought, he is straightforward in his actions. Hence, when the Bible tells us

* 2 Cor. xi. 3. † Matt. xviii. 3.

that "God made man upright," it employs a word which, in the original language, means straightness, as, for example, of a way or a line; and to be upright, is to follow, without deviation, this way, or this line. Now, man created after the image of God, followed without effort, as by instinct, this way of uprightness. This feature, so beautiful and so noble, is reproduced in the new man, which, according to the Apostle, is "created after God in *righteousness*," that is, in uprightness of mind and of heart. It also deserves to be noticed, that the Jews, though deprived of the revelations of the New Testament, thus understood the primitive state of man, and placed chiefly in this feature, which we have just described, the image of God in man. We read in the Book of Wisdom, ascribed to Solomon, these remarkable words: "God created man to be *incorruptible*, and made him to be an image of his own likeness."*

Finally, my brethren, let us not forget, (and this consideration includes all that remains for us to say on the image of God in man,) that this being, "created after God in righte-

* Wisd. ii. 25.

ousness and true holiness," bore in him a heart capable of loving. And what is the feature of his glorious perfections, that God takes the greatest pleasure in engraving upon his creature, if it be not his love? Is not God love? And shall not he, who bears impressed upon his whole being, the image of God, who places his glory in being loved, be capable of loving? Ah! that which to my eyes distinguishes the character of those pure intelligences which surround God in heaven, that which renders their state worthy of envy, still more than the glory with which they shine, is the pure love that animates them, and is the element of their felicity. And, my brethren, must not man, the sovereign of this terrestrial creation, where God has scattered so many proofs of his love, must not man have participated, in some degree, of this feature of the Divine nature which God loves to impress upon the hearts of his creatures? Yes, lively, deep, powerful affections filled the heart of the first man, since, even to this day, these affections exercise so great an influence over us, and are, often without our knowing it, the real motives of our actions. But in Adam these affections were pure, as

his whole being, they partook of that "*true holiness*" which constitutes the image of God. Doubtless he loved every thing around him; he loved the companion whom God had given him, he took pleasure in admiring and enjoying all the gifts which made the riches and ornament of his abode and the charm of his life. But never had he thought of making an idol of these things. Every thing, in his affections, was traced back to its source. God, God the author of his being, his Benefactor, his Father, was the predominant object of his love, that to which all his feelings, as well as all his worship, were directed. To man, still innocent, to love God was life.

But love is an all-powerful principle of activity, devotedness, and energy. In the first man it must have been the motive of his devotion to God, the mysterious bond of his intimate communion with Him, the sure guarantee of his filial obedience, the ineffable charm which made him find in that obedience all his happiness. So sweet is devotedness to that which we love! Ah! that servile obedience which makes us tremble before the law, because the commandment came forth with thunderings from the smoking summits

of Sinai, was unknown in Eden; that tardy, imperfect obedience, which costs our selfish, grovelling hearts so much, was unknown; it was unknown, because that same love reigned there, which makes the seraph find his happiness in flying at the will of Him who pours life and felicity over him in an unceasing stream.

Thus, my brethren, the *understanding* of man, always enlightened in the will of God, who spake to His creature as a man speaks to his friend; and the *heart* of man, which loving that sovereign will above all things, made him find liberty in perfect submission and happiness in ready obedience; so that, in him, thought, will, and affection, all united in one holy *harmony*, to the glory of Him that had "created him in righteousness and true holiness." Harmony in all the parts of his being, in which were unknown, both the inward conflicts of passion and the secret revolts of the heart, and the sufferings of remorse, and the bitterness of sin. Harmony with his God, whose will was his will, whose love was his love, and communion with whom constituted his worship and his life. Harmony with the external world, where the earth, blessed of God, made

fruitful by the breath of the Lord, offered its precious treasures to man, without requiring that he should extract them with pain from among thorns and briars; where thousands of living beings served man, for whom they had been created, and who, in his turn, loved them as the work of his Heavenly Father; where, in fine, all united to send up to the throne of the Almighty a hymn of thanksgiving and of praise. Harmony, even in the physical faculties of man, into which disease and death had not yet carried their ravages, nor introduced their train of sufferings and pains. And lastly, harmony between man's state, his noble faculties, and the destination which God had assigned him, namely, that of contributing to His glory and living happy himself. "Live, glorify me, and be happy," the Creator had said to him in giving him being; and man lived, glorified his God, and was happy—happy in the happiness of innocence and holiness, happy in the delightful feeling of an existence which nothing as yet had troubled, happy in the favour of his God, and in communion with Him, happy in the happiness which God bestows!

My brethren, here I stop. Arrived at this

point of our meditation, we have felt our eyes bedewed with tears; sorrow has filled our heart. We seemed as if we were obliged a second time to abandon Eden, where our thoughts had lingered delightfully, and to cast our eyes upon an earth which the Lord hath cursed. O holy enjoyments of the first man! O life of innocence and happiness! *true holiness!* image of my God! where are ye? Where shall my soul, thirsting after holiness and happiness, flee to find you? O man! where is the glory with which the Lord adorned thy brow?

Ah! my brethren, if our hearts, thoughts, and affections be not entirely bowed down to the earth, if there remain in our hearts one noble sigh to breathe after our first country, from the midst of this exile in which we live, must we not find, every instant, a thousand melancholy reasons to deplore the misfortunes of Adam's children with more bitterness and more tears than the prophet of the captivity ever shed over the ruins of his country and his people? What comparison can we make between the sovereign of the primitive creation and man as he now is—between Eden and this "vale of tears?" I have spoken of

the *understanding* of the first man, an understanding luminous and simple, always enlightened in the will of its God, always full of the thought of its Creator, the noble reflection of the divine perfections, the glory and ornament of the creature; and now I see in the man of the world (for, observe, I except here every thing that God has done for the reproduction of his image in the hearts of his children), nothing but "an understanding darkened," men "alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts;"* I see a being, still intelligent it is true, but "without understanding" † as to the things of eternity, governed by his senses, his passions, and matter, "loving darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil;" ‡ I see in all places, where God, in his infinite mercy, has not caused a supernatural light to shine, nothing but the darkness of a degrading idolatry. The glory and beauty of man is become his shame. I have spoken of that noble and pure simplicity which rendered man attentive and submissive to the voice of his God; and

* Eph. iv. 18. † Rom. i. 31. ‡ John iii. 19.

now I see nothing but beings who have "become vain in their imaginations,"* full of proud thoughts, systems of error which destroy one another, an aspiring philosophy which teaches man to rebel against the voice of God, even where he cannot but hear it. I have spoken of *uprightness*, that practical righteousness which should be as natural to man as life itself, and now I see in the history of human nature nothing but injustice, violence, iniquity, from the proud conqueror, who glories in the rapine and ravages which he commits upon his neighbours, and the powerful rich man, who tramples upon the widow and the orphan, and gluts himself with their spoils, even to the obscure man, who by envy, slander, and fraud, seeks to avenge himself of those who oppress him, and exercises the same tyranny over those who are dependant upon him. I have spoken of noble and pure affections, of which God was the object, of a love which was a source of obedience, of happiness, and *true holiness* in man, and now I see, in a world which is the "enemy of God," nothing but impure affections, turned aside

* Rom. i. 21.

from their destination, and making an idol of every thing to which they attach themselves; affections which have enthroned in the heart of man selfishness and pride, and which most frequently become impetuous passions, that take pleasure in polluting that which is the object of them. Alas! these affections, which still burn in the heart of man, instead of being, as in the atmosphere of Eden, a powerful principle of obedience, devotedness, and holiness, have they not become a motive of rebellion against God, of forgetfulness of his name and glory, of contempt of his will, and the source of pollutions which we dare not name? O ye noble affections! O sweet necessity of loving! ye precious gifts of God! why are ye so often, even in the hearts of those who have learned to know the God of holiness, and who endeavour to regain his image, a dangerous snare, a subtle enemy, transforming into an idol that which God permits us to love, and sowing curse and bitterness where "the Lord had ordained a blessing and life for evermore!" I have spoken of harmony, the harmony of man with himself, and now I see nothing but anguish, the struggle of a thousand different passions, a thousand different

interests, which dispute his heart, and make him the unhappy victim of their tyranny, so that even those who sigh after deliverance and holiness, find themselves engaged in a conflict which ends only with their life. I have spoken of the harmony of man with his God, and I now see only alienation of heart, enmity, rash pride, or servile fear; of the harmony of man with the external world, and I now see in the sovereign of creation nothing but a feeble being, gaining with the sweat of his brow a bread which is often disputed, and more frequently bedewed with tears; of harmony in the body of man, which was clothed with strength, and life, and beauty, and now I see only a body whose enfeebled organs contain the seeds of a thousand diseases, a thousand infirmities, the sad precursors of dissolution; finally, of harmony between the state of man, the gifts which he had received, and the eternal destination which God had assigned him, and now I see only a being who, having missed the end of his existence, lives as if all his hopes and his whole destiny were confined to this side of the tomb, to time, and matter, forgetting and dishonouring the God, whom he ought to glorify. I have spoken of happiness!

. . . . Where shall we look for it? Be our witnesses, O ye who hear us! Have you found this happiness, the object of your most ardent pursuit? Alas! on every side we see nothing but anguish, sufferings, the dissipation of delusive hopes, and misery; we have on every side only the lamentation of the afflicted, the cry of grief, the accents of despair. Is there upon earth a privileged corner which has not been bedewed with the tears and with the blood of an unhappy race?

Where then, O my God, where shall we seek Thine image thus effaced from our guilty brow? Has it disappeared for ever from the abode of man with the innocence and happiness of Eden? What do I say? My brethren, that divine image has appeared to us again in all its beauty; it has shone forth gloriously in Him who "was in the beginning with God, who was God, who dwelt among us, and whose glory we beheld, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* But, O unfathomable grief! He who alone upon earth has exhibited anew that image in all its beauty, that they who mourned over their corruption might, by following His

* John i. 2. 14.

footsteps, conceive again the holy ambition of recovering that image, was disallowed, despised, rejected of men, and is so still, at least by the majority, so far have they forgotten their origin, so true is it that "the God of this world hath blinded their eyes, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the IMAGE OF GOD, should shine into them." *

O man! O son of Adam! noblest work of creation! acknowledge, deny not, that thou hast lost the image of thy God, that thou art now but a ruin, without order or beauty; that thou art fallen, fallen into an abyss! "How doth the holy city sit solitary! how is she become a widow! and she that was great among the nations and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! The ways of Zion do mourn; all her gates are desolate; her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness. How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger, and cast down from heaven into the earth the beauty of Israel! How is the gold become dim; and the fine gold changed! The stones of the sanctuary are poured out at the top of the streets!" . . . .

* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

Let our hearts also breathe forth these sighs of the prophets! Let these important questions be upon our lips! What then has happened between the point from which we have set out and that which we have now reached? What frightful catastrophe has hurled from his throne the soverign of creation, and effaced from his heart the image of the Creator? What has made of man, whose heart possessed in perfection, "righteousness and true holiness," a poor, polluted sinner? Or to repeat the question, which is the basis of all philosophy, and has ever baffled all its efforts to explain it, what is the origin of evil in the world?

Such, my brethren, is the question which we venture to approach. But fear not lest, on this subject, we should direct your attention to those obscure depths of metaphysics in which so many systems have been lost without effect. No; all that we can know, all that it is useful for us to know on this solemn question, is communicated to us in a few verses of the word of eternal truth. The third chapter of Genesis furnishes us, in language level to the comprehension of a child, with all the information which we seek in vain

in the various systems of philosophy; and we have thought that it might be useful to us all to meditate together upon this important, but little known portion of the Word of God. We entreat you, therefore, to attend to the great and solemn truths which are there disclosed to us, and to implore with us the blessing of God on our undertaking.

My brethren, a few thoughts more from the number of those which crowd upon me on such a grave subject, and I have done. Can you conceive a being who knows that he is fallen from his first origin, or a king despoiled of his prérogatives, or a mortal fallen into crime, ready to be smitten by the sword of justice, or an unhappy individual lost in the depths of misery and woe, and yet able, with this conviction, to live in a stupid indifference to his state? Ye are that fallen being, that despoiled king, that guilty creature, that unhappy individual; yea, all of you, who with the conviction of the truths which we have just been proving, live upon this earth, forgetful of your eternal destinies, far off from an offended God, whose justice is ready to strike the guilty, reckless of the sins by which you seem to have delighted in effacing from your hearts

the last traces of God's image, unmindful even (such is the height of your folly and madness) of the cause of the misfortunes and miseries which fill your life with bitterness, and forgetful of the curse and sufferings which sin shall entail upon your eternity. O, my brethren, are there among you in this assembly, beings who, "thinking themselves wise," have to this extent become fools? We beseech you by the mercies of God and by your own dearest interests, to banish from your minds this deplorable folly, and to tear away the fatal veil of delusion which blinds you. What! after God has had pity upon you, when He owed you nothing but an eternal abandonment and the chastisement of a rebel creature, that had disturbed the order of creation and failed to accomplish the end of His being; after having come himself to enlighten you in your darkness, to save you from the shipwreck of your whole race, and place in your hands the means of recovering His glorious image, will you still continue in ruin and misery? Can you not find in your heart a single sigh to breathe after your original country, after the glorious prerogatives of your birth? My God! Can we, before

such beings, bless Thee, can we send up our songs of thanksgiving for all that Thou hast done for our deliverance? Thy love, which they despise, is worse for them than Thy most terrible threats. How can we rejoice in Thy mercies? It is these mercies that aggravate their condemnation. But, no, my brethren, I cannot persuade myself that any of you will take another step in the way of sin and of folly. O come, you who have hitherto forgotten your glorious destinies, that you might live in forgetfulness of God; come, you Christians who love Him who hath repaired the desolations made by sin; come and let us unitedly praise our God, that His image is not lost to us for ever! Let us praise Him, for He has given us as a Saviour, as a brother, as a friend, Him who hath exhibited before our eyes the features of His image, and will make us partakers of it! Let us bless Him, for He is ready to put us in possession of our inheritance! O happiness! O divine mercy! We are exiled from Eden, it is true; the flaming sword of eternal justice guards the entrance; but, behold, we can fly to Golgotha, sure to be received with love by a Saviour full of compassion. His arms are

open to us; His heart asks but to save us. We fly to Thee, O Saviour! and we implore Thee to put no bounds to Thy grace, until we see re-appearing in us all the features of Thine image, "righteousness, and true holiness."

MEDITATION II.

THE TEMPTATION.

GEN. III. 1—5.

"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field, which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened: and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

IN our preceding meditation we considered man as he came forth from the hands of his Maker, and then we cast a glance at his present condition. This comparison discovered to us an abyss between these two states. What has created this abyss? Had the Bible

left this question unanswered, the world would be but an inexplicable enigma, evil a frightful mystery, the afflictions of man an accusation against providence, and redemption a work incomprehensible and without an object. But Moses is about to give us, in a few words, the solution of this great question, the key to all the revelations of God. The third chapter of Genesis is, as it were, the vestibule of a vast and majestic edifice which God has been erecting, for ages, for our salvation. Whosoever has not entered into the meaning and spirit of this chapter, is only acquainted with the exterior of this building.

My brethren, let us summon up all our faith in the eternal truth of the word of God, and let us enter, without fearing the difficulties which we shall meet with in our way, into this edifice, where are inscribed, with the first sins and the first woes of man, the solution of his destiny, and the hope of his redemption. The subject of our meditation this day shall be *the Temptation.* To introduce you into the subject, by removing some difficulties connected with it, and explaining the external circumstances of it; and to show you the temptation, first in an insidious question of the

enemy, which shakes the confidence of the woman, and then in a denial of the truth of God; such shall be the order of our ideas.

Adam was happy in Eden, surrounded with all the gifts of nature that could adorn his abode and spread in it abundance and joy. Innocence and peace reigned in his heart; the blessing and the love of his God rested both upon him and upon the woman whom God had given him for a companion. A pure love united them; they exercised a gentle sway over the works of God; they found pleasure in cultivating the different plants and trees which spread over Eden their cooling shade, their opening beauty, and their delicious fruits. Here is the "tree of life," to which God has attached, as to a visible symbol, the assurance of their immortality, a pledge of their eternal communion with the living God. There is "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," which is to be an approving witness of their fidelity, if they continue in their obedience, but also the fatal instrument which shall teach them to know the bitterness of evil, if they fall into sin. It is to this tree God attaches a command, which is to place man in a state of dependence and

responsibility; he is forbidden to eat of its fruit. Obedience to the command is the good of which man is to acquire a consciousness by the object itself to which the divine order is attached; disobedience is the evil, in like manner, to be known by the mysterious tree, which, on that account, is called "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." In the simplicity of his innocence, man knew as little the nature of good as of evil. He could only acquire the knowledge of them in two ways: either by observing the order of his God, which gave him the consciousness of his obedience, or by violating that order, which gave him the knowledge of evil by a sad contrast with good.

But this was not the only reason why God gave His creature a command, or rather a prohibition, to observe. God owes it to His eternal sovereignty to place all His intelligent creatures in a state of dependence and responsibility. God wills an established order in the moral, as well as in the physical world. Further, God wills, as we see in every page of His word, that His creatures should render him a free obedience, a worship of the heart, which would be destroyed by the ab-

sence of all responsibility, or by the impossibility of sinning. God acts towards His creature, as a good father towards his child, whom he does not leave to his own uncertain will, or to the hazard of his destiny. The whole universe obeys the voice of the Creator; the worlds which roll in space, and the blade of grass which we tread beneath our feet, fulfil the law of their being; they proclaim the order established by the Sovereign of heaven and earth; "they declare the glory of God, and show forth His handy work." They observe, mechanically it is true, because they are destitute of intelligence, the law which was imposed upon them; but the being that has received a mind to understand, and a heart to love, must have a consciousness of duty, and produce an obedience emanating from a will free and upright, and a heart loving and pure. Now, in order to this, such an intelligent creature must be in a state of responsibility; and that responsibility exist, there must be a law. The angels of heaven themselves, the pure intelligences which surround the throne of God, are placed under that eternal law of order which the Almighty has established in the whole extent of creation; and

Scripture teaches us, that it is for having violated this law of dependence and responsibility, and for having wished to be a law unto themselves, that the Lord hath "reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day, the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation."* It was right, therefore, that this law should be imposed upon man; it was imposed upon him, and for reasons unknown and of little importance to us, it was attached to the tree, called, for this reason, "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." These reasons some have sought in the supposition that the fruit of this tree was, in itself, hurtful to man, perhaps poisonous, and, in a thousand useless speculations,† since it is the command itself, and not the object, to which it was attached, that we are to keep in view.

The command then was plain, distinct, easy to observe, and accompanied by a terrible sanction: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou

* Jude 6. † See the Exegesis on ch. ii. 16, 17.

shalt surely die." Will our first parents obey the voice of their God? or will they violate His law? The gratitude, the love which they owe Him, the pleasure of communion with Him, the deep veneration which they must feel for His power, His wisdom, His goodness, the happiness which they enjoy, the rich abundance of all the fruits of the earth, of which He has given them the free enjoyment, the child-like and confiding innocence, which fills their heart—all, all appear to guarantee their perseverance in obedience. An impure temptation could not rise up in their heart; it is not, then, from thence that we are to look for the origin of evil; to seek it in God would be blasphemy. Whence, then, could evil come? Let us not forget, that it can only come from without; and it is this circumstance, a happy one in the misfortunes of man, that will one day make a reparation possible.

Alas! evil already existed, but it was not in man, it was not in Eden. Who, then, is the being, in the whole immensity of creation, that will take a baneful pleasure in precipitating into crime innocent creatures, and happy beings into ruin? Let our historian answer. But what is his reply? Is it among the crea-

tures destitute of intelligence that he sees the seducer of the first man, and the author of the woes of the human race? He speaks of *a serpent!* At this word infidelity smiles, and ranks, without discrimination, the ancient Mosaic narrative with those mythological fables, which abound in the history of the nations of antiquity; at this word the learned man, who submits to the word of God, because he has examined the proofs which establish its truth upon an irrefragable foundation, exhausts all his ingenuity in making conjectures; forms a thousand hypotheses which may, to his view, throw some light upon this mysterious passage of Holy Writ. Perhaps, thinks he, it was not a real serpent, but some being that had assumed that form; perhaps the whole scene of the temptation is only a figure, a kind of parable, designed to teach us a moral truth; perhaps it is only a poetic personification, a figure very common among the oriental writers, by means of which we make even inanimate objects express the impressions which they produce upon us, and the thoughts which the view of them gives rise to; perhaps the sacred author wished thus to render more tangible to us the reason-

ings of Eve, on seeing the serpent eat the fruit of the tree which was forbidden to her; perhaps . . . . . but enough of hypothesis. We do not wish, however, to condemn as rash, or to anathematize those who thus seek to explain a passage, which, it must be confessed, has its difficulties. We would even have been tempted to adopt the opinion of one or other of them, were we not convinced, after a mature examination of the subject, that the manifest intention of the author was to relate a fact purely historical, in which not a word indicates a figure, more than in the rest of the book of Genesis. Moses speaks to us of a natural serpent; a serpent which was "more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made;" a serpent which, as we shall hereafter see, is condemned for the part which it had taken in the temptation, to the state in which we now behold that animal; a serpent whose well known character is here described—subtleness, cunning. But this serpent speaks! How can we believe articulate sounds to come from a being which does not possess the organs of speech? We shall not have to answer this objection, or enter into new hypotheses on the kind of serpent

which is here spoken of. But I would say, first: What do we know of the nature of this, or of all the other animals, previous to the fall of man? How do we know that they did not partake of faculties, which they lost by participating in the disorganization which sin has introduced into the world, and which the most superficial observer can perceive?* And, however that may be, consider the remains of instinct, I had almost said of reason, in those creatures, whose nature is so little studied, those creatures which we call brutes, but which, however, compare and judge of objects, distinguish a friend from an enemy, revenge, in the latter, an injury committed a long time before, and testify towards the former their gratitude for a kindness received, which supposes in them a kind of feeling, passion, and memory. What surprisingly difficult lessons are some animals capable of learning! and, finally, if we hear some of them repeat whole phrases, distinctly articulated, what is there incredible in a serpent's speaking? Besides, what do we know of the manner in which beings of another order than our

* Exegesis on ch. i. 14—17.

own communicate their thoughts? We, indeed, require organs to speak! But what organs pronounced, at the baptism of Jesus, those words which the by-standers heard, "This is my beloved Son?" What organs addressed to Saul those terrible words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And not to bring forward the numerous examples which the Bible contains, what organs communicated to the Saviour, in a temptation which has more than one point of resemblance with that which now occupies us, the words of the Tempter? We confess, then, our faith in the purely and simply historical sense of the narrative of Moses.

But it will be said, the serpent not only pronounces words, but it thinks, it reasons. "Yea, hath God said, *ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*" This objection leads us to another class of ideas, and to the real point of the temptation. Yes, indeed, the serpent reasons; it addresses to Eve an insidious question, the subtlety and depth of which strike us, arrest us, and compel us to say, Here the serpent is but a miserable instrument. There is here a secret power which thinks, speaks, and acts through it. The words which it pro-

nounces cannot proceed from an innocent, irrational being. I hear, on the contrary, from its mouth the wily and insidious question of a seducer. Moses, for good reasons, which it is not difficult to account for, relates the thing, it is true, as it must have appeared to our first parents, and in a simple and child-like language, which so strongly bears the character of that age, that if his narrative were different, we should be strongly tempted to call it in question. But who can think that he attributes to an animal that seduction which, according to his own testimony, was followed by such terrible consequences? No, without any doubt, he saw in these facts, the agency of a being, upon whose nature *and existence* the subsequent revelations of God have thrown the greatest light. Indeed, the existence of a malevolent being of a spiritual nature, fallen from God, "because he continued not in the truth,"* a being who, as the spirit of evil, takes an infernal pleasure in plunging into ruin those of God's creatures over which he can exercise his fatal influence; a being who has thus established upon earth *a kingdom of*

* John viii. 44.

darkness, and whom the Scripture calls Satan, the devil; the existence of this being is constantly supposed, and expressly taught by Jesus Christ and his Apostles.* Now we find in the New Testament, testimonies which most clearly ascribe to this spirit of darkness the seduction of our first parents. Paul could not have seen in this event merely the agency of an irrational creature, when he said, "The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety."† Our Lord makes an evident allusion to the chapter upon which we are meditating, when he declares that the devil was "a murderer from the beginning."‡ And St. John seems to comment upon these words of his master, when he says, "The devil sinneth from the beginning; for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."§ But to confine myself to one more testimony of an inspired author, I shall again cite the last-mentioned writer, who, alluding to the form under which the devil beguiled our first parents, designates

* The reader is requested to peruse attentively, among a hundred other passages, the four following: Matt. xiv. 39; xii. 28. 1 Pet. v. 8. Eph. ii. 2.

† 2 Cor. xi. 3. ‡ John viii. 44. § John iii. 8.

him, in two passages of the Apocalypse, "that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, that deceiveth the whole world."* And lastly, we know that the Jews admitted, as an article of faith, the influence of the devil in the first sin committed upon earth. "Through the envy of the devil, death hath entered into the world."† It was then Satan, he "who goeth about as a roaring lion," that uttered in Eden words of temptation and of sin. Observe now what the Apostle calls "his devices."

See how the character of the seducer betrays itself in the external circumstances of the temptation. First, the enemy attacks the woman, knowing her to be more weak and more impressionable. Though, like her husband, she bore in her all the features of the divine likeness, it is probable that she was inferior to him, as well in strength as in knowledge; perhaps, also, she had received only mediately, through Adam, the prohibition, the violation of which was the cause of her ruin. However this may be, it is against the weak that the dastardly enemy of souls especially directs his assaults; it is the weak that have the

* Rev. xii. 9; xx. 2. † Wisd. ii. 24.

greatest conflicts to sustain, the most temptations to overcome. It is when the disciples of our Lord in Gethsemane are weakened and overpowered by deep feelings of sorrow, that our Lord repeats to them, with the greatest solicitude, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Happy the weak believer, who is not surprised in his weakness! Happy if he feels it, deplores it, distrusts himself on account of it; and if, seeking every thing from Him whose "strength is perfected in our weakness," he can say with Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong!"

Remark again, that the enemy attacks the woman when she is *alone*, when she is deprived of the succour, which the presence of her companion and of the support of her life afforded her. Solitude, which is favourable to reflection, self-examination, and the study of our own hearts, may possess the most precious advantages; but what temptations also, what impure thoughts, may rise up in the heart of him who has only himself as a witness of his impressions, when he is so unhappy as not to bring with him into his solitude a lively and sanctifying feeling of the presence of God! Ah! He well knew our nature who gave us,

as a means of sanctification, as well as a sweet enjoyment, communion with His children! Doubtless God can and will guard His child in all situations of life; yet remember, Christians, remember your precious privileges, and turn them to your salvation! Be strong in the strength which God has given to you, brethren! Children of God, form, by your union, a holy phalanx, which shall be invincible and invulnerable. "There the Lord hath commanded a blessing, and life for evermore."

But we come at length to the words of the temptation. "*Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*" It is impossible to conceive a sentence, under the appearance of a simple and innocent question, more insidious, more calculated to throw error and doubt into the unsuspecting mind of the woman. If she lends her ear to this question, if she examines it, if she looks at it with satisfaction, no more inward peace for her, no more simple faith, no more child-like confidence in the Word of her God, or obedience to His law. We see here a master-stroke of seduction, more artful and more powerful than the most humble supplications, the most ter-

rible threats, the softest flattery, or the most brilliant eloquence. There are in this question, two things equally dangerous to the soul of Eve, a fatal doubt of the truth of the Word of God, and a perfidious exaggeration, calculated to insinuate distrust.

I say, first, a doubt of the truth of the Word of God. "Hath God said?" Here is an insinuation calculated to sap the foundation of all faith, all obedience, all morality, all established order. This is what the testimony of a daily experience proclaims to us with a loud voice. Here is the most powerful weapon of the devil and of our own wicked heart; the weapon by which thousands and thousands are smitten and plunged into ruin. This temptation surprises them under every form, in the most dangerous moments of human life, and often by means of those who, without knowing it, do the work of the seducer. Observe, he does not yet venture formally to deny the divine truth, and the certainty of man's responsibility. An effrontery so rash, to which, however, the devil will soon have recourse, would then have scandalized Eve, as it would do many souls now, who do not fear to nourish and cherish a doubt;

and even to a great many, who still profess to believe that God has spoken, but are not afraid frequently to utter the insidious question of the first temptation, "*Hath God said?*" Hath God said? insinuated the seducer in Eden: hath God said? repeat the seducers of the world; hath God said, that to please Him we must abstain from those enjoyments and pleasures, which He has placed within our reach, doubtless that we might taste them? Hath God said that the "friendship of the world is enmity against God; and that whosoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God?" Hath God said that we must forsake all and follow Him, bearing our cross; that "if we love father or mother, or sister or brother, or house or lands, more than Him, we are not worthy of Him?" Hath God said that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," that we have within us an evil and corrupt heart, that "the carnal mind in us is not subject to the law of God," that our life is polluted with sin? Hath God said that "He doth not hold the sinner guiltless, that He hateth sin, that the broad road leadeth to destruction?" No, no, God is not so severe; he is too good a father to punish the *weaknesses*

of his children; beware of taking in the letter, the figurative language of the threatenings of the Bible, or at least, reserve them for the wicked or great criminals. God well knows that we are weak; be honest, repent of your faults, and all will go well.

When doubt has thus despoiled the Word of God of its immutable sanctity, weakened the obligation and responsibility of the creature towards the Creator, opened a wide door to passion, which hurries us along and paves the way for temptation; these same truths, which the deadly breath of doubt has not yet been able to destroy, because they contain an immortal force, are presented to the already wavering soul with an exaggeration which shall soon engender distrust. Hath God said, "*Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*" These delicious fruits which the earth produces, which seem to have been placed before you to spread in your abode abundance, beauty, and well being, shall ye not taste of any of these gifts? Are they only here to excite in you useless desires? Has He whom you adore as your God, imposed upon you such hard laws? It is thus in the present day also; they who insinuate doubts of the truths

of God's word, guard against presenting them faithfully and in their true light. They are skilful in disfiguring them, in showing that observance to the laws of God is incompatible with our weakness, that the morality of the gospel is not made for men, and that there would be injustice in chastisement inflicted upon those who do not conform their lives to them. They are skilful in throwing ridicule upon those who let the Bible speak for itself, believe it in its whole extent, and abandon the multitude to range themselves under the banner of obedience to their God. They are skilful in presenting, under a false light, the vital doctrines of the gospel, in showing that they are contrary to reason, and that we must, as soon as possible, apply to them the amendments of human wisdom. They are skilful in persuading those who hear them, that a living and true faith is a renunciation of reason, that filial submission is bondage, and that to give up the world, its joys, and its vanities, is to throw a veil of gloom and melancholy over the whole life. They would willingly say to the God of the Bible, if they were as sincere as the unprofitable servant in the parable, "I know that thou art an austere master, reaping where

thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed."

Now let the temptation present itself; every thing in the heart of the unhappy being who has lent an ear to the lying insinuations of the tempter, is prepared for the fatal hour of seduction . . . . and of ruin. Know ye, my brethren, the power of temptation? It is present, it presses the poor heart, in which it finds but too much sympathy; it draws it along by the charm of sin, decked in seducing colours; conscience lifts up its voice; the conflict begins; you resist, for the thunders of God's word against sin echo from afar, and bring trouble into the depths of your soul. But, in the heat of the conflict, a doubt arises; *Hath God said?* Will He be offended at this weakness? Will He care for it? Will He punish? Thus is broken the last restraint imposed upon the impetuosity of the temptation; the barrier of the Word of God is overthrown: you yield . . . . And thus you are delivered over to the torments of remorse; you come forth from a vortex, to taste all the bitterness of that which, a moment before, appeared to you so sweet!

Such, my brethren, is the scene which took

place in Eden; such is the history of our wretched heart, and of our miserable life! What truth there is in these facts, traced by the historian of man's woes! How true it is, that certain ruin follows a disbelief of the Word of God! How true it is, that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith!" Ah! woe to him that lends an ear to the perfidious insinuations of the enemy! Woe! woe, especially to the false prophets, who propagate doubt, while they profess to have faith in the Word of God, our only safeguard! My God! "increase my faith!" My God! "lead us not into temptation!"

Let us now hear the words of the woman, and let us see if they do not confirm the truth of this melancholy picture of the temptation which I have endeavoured to draw. It seems, at first, that she remains firm, that the captious question of the devil has made no impression on her. She repels the lying exaggeration of her perfidious enemy: "We may eat," she says, "of the fruit of the trees of the garden; they are there for our enjoyment; God does not treat us, as you insinuate, like a hard and niggardly master. See the abundance, the riches, the beauty of the different

productions which He hath commanded the earth to produce for our comfort." And herein, my brethren, we ought to imitate Eve; it is well for us to avail ourselves of our glorious privileges, of the goodness and love of our God, to show to the world what happiness there is in the "glorious liberty of the children of God," which to them appears a bondage; what joy there is in the ways of piety, which seem to them so gloomy. We ought to imitate Eve, also, in her promptitude in recalling to mind the express prohibition of God, in which her safety consisted: "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, lest ye die."

But here the wisdom of the woman ends, and probably, also, the purity of her innocence. Her first error was to stop, in presence of the temptation, to listen to a question which called in doubt the truth of God's word. Though her inexperience of evil, her simplicity, the captious expressions of the tempter, in whom she did not yet see the enemy of her soul, may, in some degree, serve to excuse her, why did not a doubt raised against the solemn command of her Creator, excite her

distrust and indignation? Let us, my brethren, who, to use the language of an apostle, "are not ignorant of the devices of Satan," and know, by sad experience, the deceitfulness and wickedness of our hearts—let us be on our guard against his insinuations; let us distrust ourselves; let us shun evil; let us never make a compromise with that which the Lord has cursed! Observe, then, that Eve does not repeat the prohibition of God as he had given it. She adds to it a clause, at least, useless; *neither shall ye touch it:* words by which she seems to wish to magnify her respect for the commandment of the Almighty. But why comment on, explain, and amplify a clear, positive, and complete command? Do not these words betray in her that inward uneasiness which always accompanies temptation, the feeling of a weakness which we wish to dissemble from ourselves and others, by an exaggerated expression of our horror for a thing which we secretly desire, and of our respect for the law of God, which we dare not yet infringe? Experience, doubtless, has taught you, that it is not those who speak in the loudest terms of the fear of God, of duty, and of virtue, that are the furthest from

their fall; while often the sincere and humble soul, that fears its weakness, and laments its propensity to evil, is preserved by the power of its God, because it fights honestly against sin. In fine, there is another falsification of the command of God, in the manner in which the woman repeats it. According to her, the sanction of the command would be, *Lest ye die;* while, in reality, that sanction was, "*Thou shalt surely die.*" Who does not here see a soul wavering between simple faith and doubt, between filial, prompt, entire obedience, and the allurement of temptation? Who does not see here the effect of the insidious question of the enemy? When sin is in question, he who doubts the certain consequences which it brings along with it, is already vanquished. We have already established this truth, we shall not dwell upon it any longer. O may the Word of our God, as He has given it to us, be received with the full assurance of faith, without reserve, purely and simply! May that word be our armour, our buckler, our defence!

If in our conflicts we neglect this powerful means of victory, a certain fall will be the first chastisement of our neglect, for then we ex-

pose, unprotected, to the enemy, the most vulnerable point of our being. See how Satan avails himself of the fatal disposition which he remarks in the woman. He throws away the mask of his perfidious subtlety; he blasphemously gives the lie to the Word of God, upon which he had hitherto done no more than throw a slight doubt: "Ye shall not surely die!" Behold, my brethren, the first lie that polluted the earth which we inhabit! Behold, how he, whom Jesus Christ designates with so much reason "a liar, and the father of lies,"* betrays himself! Behold, how, after having introduced doubt and disquiet into her mind, by the insidious question, "Hath God said?" he endeavours to lead the woman to trample under foot the solemn command of God, by this impious lie, "Ye shall not surely die!" Such is the progress of evil, such the march of temptation!

And think you, my brethren, that this work of darkness and seduction, which began in Eden, ended with the fall of our first parents? No, no; it is followed up continually by all the means which the father of lies can make

* John viii. 44.

use of, to turn away men from the faith, and to make them doubt the eternal justice of God, to which he owes it, to punish sin. Hence, while the divine word, and the faithful ministers of that word, proclaim to every unconverted sinner this sanction of the eternal law, *Thou shalt surely die*, a thousand voices are raised in the world, in its societies, in its books, and, perhaps, (awful to relate,) even in the sanctuary of divine truth, to repeat after the father of lies, *Ye shall not surely die!* In vain does the Word of the Lord tell the sinner, unreconciled to God, by the blood of the Saviour, in vain do the servants of Christ repeat after it, that "the wages of sin is death," that the "broad road leadeth unto destruction," that "the soul that sinneth shall die;" the lie of Eden is sounded in his ears, *Ye shall not surely die!* In vain the Saviour of the world Himself tells every one, that hath ears to hear, "Unless ye be converted, ye shall all likewise perish," "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," they nevertheless repeat, *Ye shall not surely die!* In vain does Truth say, "If ye walk after the flesh ye shall die," "to be carnally minded is death," "without holiness

no man shall see the Lord," the lie repeats, "*Ye shall not surely die!*" And what is most melancholy in this contrast, in this conflict between truth and falsehood, is, that the latter almost always finds an echo in our hearts, while the voice of truth is stifled. Yes, our sinful heart leagues itself with error against truth, and against our salvation. And from that moment, how can the lying words of the tempter but be received with avidity? "Your eyes shall be opened," he continues, calling upon the name of God, and thus sanctioning with blasphemy his seducing promise, "*God doth know*, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, (or as God,) knowing good and evil."

We shall see, in a subsequent meditation, what is the meaning of the first part of this promise, and how it was accomplished. Let it suffice us to say, that the words, *ye shall be as gods, or as God*, offered to the pride to which they were about to give birth, a prey which it has not ceased from that time to seize with eagerness. It is not the allurement of a carnal temptation that is offered to beings still free from the bondage of the senses, but

a temptation spiritual like their nature. And still is the enemy of souls skilful in laying for men, according to their nature, their position, and their inclinations, snares into which they will rush with all the ardour of beings that expect to find their happiness therein. One of those snares, which, like an immense net, incloses all the children of Adam who have not seen, deplored, and abjured this guilty folly, is the proud ambition of wishing *to be* as gods, of wishing to shake off the yoke of the Omnipotent, to deny their dependence and responsibility, and be a law unto themselves. This is "the mystery of iniquity;" it is sin in its essence. They have said, like the men in the parable, "We will not have this man to reign over us," and they too faithfully keep their rash word. To look at the mass of society as it is, one would suppose that there was no God that reigned in heaven. Are not our public men and our men of society ashamed to confess the name of God, and to give Him glory? Do they not deny His right of domination over their hearts, their affections, their thoughts, and their whole life? Is there not in our hearts, even where we are desirous to base our wisdom on the fear of

God, a secret and proud repugnance to admit, without reserve, the eternal sovereignty of God over all that we have and all that we are? Does not the authority of God's word, and will it not ever encounter in us a feeling of rebellion, which impels us to deny or reject it? Fatal promise of the tempter! too well has it been accomplished! What! worm of the earth, creature of a day, who hast received existence from the free goodness of God, who receivest life from moment to moment, as he deals it out to thee, and whose every respiration and every beating of the heart is a continual gift of the Creator, thou wouldest be independent? Thou canst not take a step unless He supply thee with strength, and yet thou wouldest live without God? Were He to let thee fall from that powerful hand which drew thee out of nothing, and which bountifully holds thee up, thou wouldest soon be mingled with the vile dust of the earth; and yet thou wouldest be *as God?* My brethren, a folly so criminal, an ingratitude so monstrous, is only understood, because, alas! we all ourselves daily have experience of it. But so long as such a state of mind continues, so long as we have not abjured such a pride

with horror, so long as our thoughts, our affections, and our will have not been brought into obedience to the sovereignty of God, and under the gentle dominion of His love, there is in us, whatever we may be otherwise, nothing but sin and eternal misery. Who can live separated from the source of life? Who can allay the parching thirst which consumes him, by withdrawing from the source of living waters? The promise of the devil, then, includes within it, crime, death, and eternal ruin. Woe to him who lends an ear to it!

My brethren, in finishing this exhibition of the temptation in Eden, I turn to you, and ask you, Is not this your history? Is not this what passes in you every time you have the misfortune to fall into sin? Is not this a faithful picture of the state of your souls, and of the assaults which your perfidious enemy, leagued with our own hearts, directs against you? Ah! since the Word of God, in accordance with your own experience, admonishes you of your danger, shows you the gulf beneath your feet, and points out the way of sin and ruin to which it leads, we beseech you, by the mercies of God, and by your own most precious interests, to give attention

to these things, to watch, to pray, to flee from the wrath to come. There are two solemn thoughts which I would leave deeply impressed upon the hearts of two different classes of persons who hear me; you who are constrained to make the painful confession, that you are still entangled in the snares of the tempter, that, plunged by him in sin and alienation from God, you have not yet been reconciled to your offended Creator by the blood of the Saviour who has repaired the disorders of sin; remember that you are in a state of ruin, that the wages of sin is death, that the broad road leadeth to destruction. Remember, also, that you have been warned of your danger, that God, after having made a free and unlooked-for salvation possible, has done every thing to save you; remember that we have this day again fulfilled our ministry among you, and that, if that ministry be unsuccessful, we indeed shall weep tears of sorrow for you, but you alone shall bear the punishment. Perhaps this very moment, while I am addressing you with an earnest desire for your salvation, a lying voice may be repeating, in the depths of your heart, "Thou shalt not die." If ye hear it and

despise the truth which I preach to you, I solemnly call God to witness between us; and hear the testimony which shall soon be proclaimed concerning you and me in the great day of eternal judgment: "Son of man, I have set thee to be a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, *he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.*"

I proceed to my second reflection. You who are animated by a sincere desire to cast off the tyrannical yoke of sin, to renounce the devil and his works of darkness, and you who already follow Jesus, bearing His yoke and His cross by faith, and fear above all things the deceitfulness of your own hearts, remember that you fight not alone. Remember that Christ appeared "to destroy the works of the

devil," that "He who is with you is greater than he that is in the world," and that "in all things ye shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved you." A few more days of conflict, of temptations, of trials, and of tears, and ye shall see Eden without temptations and without sin!

MEDITATION III.

THE ALLUREMENTS OF THE TEMPTATION.—THE NATURE OF SIN.

GEN. III. 6.

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

WE entered, in a preceding meditation, into the scene of seduction which took place in Eden. We saw, from numerous testimonies of Scripture, that Satan was the author of the temptation, that he endeavoured to insinuate doubt and error into the innocent mind of Eve, first by a captious question, and then by a rash and blasphemous denial of the truth of God. We thought we could perceive also, in the answers of the woman, that primary dis-

quietude which precedes evil, and the wavering of a soul which treads with an uncertain step on the verge of a precipice, kept back by fear, and pushed on by the force of temptation.

Let us continue. Let us enter again into Eden; our first parents have not yet been banished from it. But, alas! why is it, that in fixing our eyes upon them and upon the last efforts of the temptation, we are called to witness the triumphs of the prince of darkness, and of the cause of the woes and ruin of mankind!

We have already had occasion to remark, that the kind of temptation presented to Eve, in Eden, was the only one that could have had attractions for beings spiritual and pure. The steps by which the woman descends into the depths of sin, and the force with which she is drawn down into it, are in perfect accordance with our own sad and oft repeated experience. Let us give a serious attention to the recital of the sacred historian; it concerns us all; he seems to describe, by anticipation, a scene which passes too often in our own miserable life. "And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one

wise;" or, according to the simple and artless expressions of the original, "the woman saw that the tree was for food, and a desire to the eyes, and to be wished for to give knowledge," (or rather wisdom, understanding.)*

If we translate these words in a language more metaphysical, we shall find that they include the three elements which are considered to constitute perfection: *goodness*, *beauty*, and *truth*. Goodness in that which pleases the taste, beauty in that which delights the sight, truth in that which gives knowledge or wisdom. And remark, that in seeking this perfection the woman obeyed an impulse which God himself had given to her nature. Yes, it was the eternal destination of man to love, admire, and appropriate to himself all that is good, all that is beautiful, all that is true. It was his destination to grow in that perfection which he already possessed by nature, but which might be developed to infinity by his union with Him who is Goodness, Beauty, Truth, and Sovereign Perfection. It was therefore in Him alone, and in the harmony of their will with His, that our

* See on these words the exegetical notes.

first parents were to seek perfection. The commandment which God had given them, was intended to lead them to this perfection, by placing them in a state of dependence and responsibility. It was designed to unite them to their Creator, and to give them the consciousness of all that is good, beautiful, and true in the moral, as well as in the visible world, which was their habitation.

But, alas! a doubt has entered into the mind of Eve, already guilty through the admission of it; the word of her God is no longer her light and the sole object of her confidence; she is going to seek *out* of God, goodness, beauty, and truth; yea, she expects to find them in the very object whose enjoyment has been forbidden her under pain of death, in disobedience, and in sin! Henceforward all is changed in the objects of her desires, because all is changed in her heart; henceforward we see in her pursuit of a false perfection and of a false happiness, nothing but what St. John calls, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." It is not without design that we make this application of the passage just quoted. The words of St. John seem a literal translation of those of Moses:

the *goodness* which the woman foolishly thought she saw in an object, the enjoyment of which God had cursed, is no more than "the lust of the flesh;" the beauty (or, according to the original, the *desire to the eyes*) is no more than "the lust of the eye;" and, finally, the *truth* (or the wisdom and knowledge, which were to lead to it) is nothing more than "the pride of life."

My brethren, take good heed to this! Ye, especially, noble and lofty souls, who, feeling only disgust at the thought of low and degrading pleasures, seek enjoyments worthy of you, in things which appear to you good, beautiful, and true; remember that nothing, nothing is so out of God; remember, on the contrary, that every thing is evil, deformed, and false, in those things which are in opposition to the Sovereign Word of the Almighty, whatever may be their outward appearances. It is one of the most artful devices of Satan, and of our own corrupt hearts, to persuade us, from specious appearances, that certain things are *good* and calculated to promote our happiness, even though they may be opposed to the will of God, and clearly forbidden in His Word. So many are the illusions and pre-

texts which too often blind us and make us wish to judge, *by our own experience*, of the value of such an action, towards which we are drawn by a natural inclination, instead of holding exclusively to what the infallible rule pronounces! We are surrounded by "trees of the knowledge of good and evil," objects upon which God has laid the anathema of His law, and which the devices of Satan and the sophistry of our own hearts too often clothe to our eyes, with an apparent goodness. Now, if encouraged by the voice of error, we stretch forth a presumptuous hand to seize the fruit, what is there that will restrain us upon the verge of the precipice? In such a moment of a powerful and active temptation, what is there that will secure us, if the action towards which we are already irresistibly drawn, appear to us also supported by a thousand plausible and praiseworthy motives? Without any doubt we shall surrender ourselves to that action, or that enjoyment, upon the faith of a lie; and when we come to ourselves we shall be taught, by the bitterness of sin, that we have laid our hand upon an object cursed of God, and that, instead of having tasted a fruit *good* for food, we have

been drawn into ruin by "the lust of the flesh."

There is something very noble, very worthy of the creature of God, in that love of the *beautiful* which so powerfully influences man, in that exquisite taste by which he judges of it, and which, before his fall, prepared for him such refined enjoyments. Happy man, had he never separated the beautiful from the good! It is to this love of the beautiful that we owe the sublime productions of genius; happy had they been as pure as they are beautiful! It is to this precious gift that we are indebted also for the sweet admiration with which the works and perfections of God inspire us; happy had that admiration always been a pure homage, like the worship of Eden!

But, alas! here also, mankind have but too faithfully imitated the first woman; they have sought the beautiful out of God, out of the harmony of their will with His will. And since that time, where has been the truly beautiful? There is no beauty, except in the purity of innocence. Eve might have looked a thousand times with a pure admiration on all the trees with which God had adorned

her abode, and even upon that one to which He had attached His command; but now, every glance which she casts upon that object *agreeable to the sight*, is but an impure *desire*, as Moses calls it, a lust, as St. John designates it. Such also is our situation among the objects around us, which have been created for our enjoyment. Alas! since we have become sinners, that which to our eyes is clothed with forms and hues of beauty, is often but a curse. Let us be on our guard and watch over ourselves; let us remember that sin does not always present itself to us under its hideous aspect, but more frequently under forms full of beauty, charms, and attractiveness; let us remember that under these captivating flowers are concealed crime and hell; let us remember that the moment that which pleases the eye nourishes lust, there is sin. Eve had fallen before she stretched forth a guilty hand to seize the object of the divine prohibition; she had fallen, for she had opened her heart to lust. Temptation is not sin; the moment the object of the temptation becomes, as to Eve, "a desire to the eyes," that desire, before Him who tries the heart, is sin. "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her,

hath already committed adultery with her in his heart," and it is the same with all other sins. Thus the evil which is in man, and which has corrupted all his faculties, converts sight, the most useful and wonderful of all the organs with which God has furnished the human body, that organ by which we are enabled to indulge with enthusiasm in the love of the beautiful, into the most dangerous instrument of seduction; thus sin pollutes the gifts of God, turns them from their original aim, withers all that is beautiful, and transforms our noblest enjoyments into impure *lusts of the eyes!*

Finally, another element in that perfection, which man was to aim at, was the love of the true, the desire to know; a powerful tendency towards the infinite development of the faculties of the understanding. This gift would have led to the noblest results, the purest enjoyments, and to boundless happiness, had man exercised it in God, and had he made use of it to grow in the knowledge of His works and of His adorable perfections. But, alas! this divine gift becomes, under the influence of the tempter, an element of pride; he attaches to it his fatal and too truly ac-

complished promise: "Your eyes shall be opened, ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil;" and with these words insinuate into the heart of the woman, doubt, error, pride, and a guilty ambition, which she proceeds to satisfy by trampling under foot the express command of her God. Yes, it is again out of God, it is at the price of her own ruin and that of her posterity, that she wishes to learn to know good and evil! How have her children followed her footsteps? What use does man make of his noble understanding? What is the object to which the learned man directs the results of his researches, his labours, his lucubrations? To God or to the world, to the glory of God or to the glory which cometh from men? to his own advancement in the knowledge and love of God, or to the satisfying of his pride and vanity? The divine Word hath declared: "There is none that seeketh after God, they are all gone astray." Look at the young man, look at the young woman, in whom the gifts of the understanding are just developed, but to whom every thing in the world and in nature is still new; what is the nourishment with which they feed that understanding? Is it God, His works,

His perfections, His love? No; but the world and its charms, and its seductions, and its false joys, and the deceptions of the heart, and the whole impure tissue of human life, which they enter upon glowing with desires, with the curiosity of hope, burning to know every thing, aspiring after every thing but God and His truth, and never arriving at any thing but a feeling of void and bitterness, the miserable fruit of the *pride of life*.

Such, my brethren, is the history of the first sin, and the history of all the sins of man. Such are the allurements which seduced Eve, and the steps by which she was hurried into ruin. Persuaded by the father of lies that the tree is good for food, she fixes on it an eye of covetousness, then she desires to know evil. From that moment, the evil is consummated; the barriers of fear, of love, of gratitude, of submission, have fallen with her faith . . . . *She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat!* This is no more than the material manifestation of sin, which already existed in her heart. An Apostle has traced for our instruction, the path which Eve travelled, and which all sinners tread: "Every man is tempted when he is drawn aside by his own

lusts and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth—sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth—death!"

But, alas! this is not all. It is the nature of sin to communicate itself from one to another, and to propagate its ravages like a gangrene. Eve fell, but not alone; she draws with her into ruin the companion of her life, who also becomes a sharer in her disobedience and sin. No sooner has she failed to fulfil the end of her being towards her God, than she becomes unfaithful to her destination with regard to her husband. When once the heart is turned aside from God, when once it has ceased to be upright before Him and to be sanctified by His presence, all the relations among men partake in that corruption. The most intimate affections, the dearest and most legitimate relations are turned into snares. And we then are frequently so unhappy as to communicate the poison which is in our hearts, to those whom we most love; which is the first bitter chastisement of our unfaithfulness! Thus Eve was to have been a companion and help to Adam; she was to have adorned for him his abode in Eden; to have added the charm of her presence to the happiness which he en-

joyed, and to have shared the pure love which united them one to another, and both to their God. Such had been their union up to the fatal moment when sin entered into the heart of the woman. But from that time,—O bitterness and curse of sin!—from that time Eve becomes the seducer of her husband, who, in his turn, becomes an accomplice in the crime of his wife. I know not if the ingenious and beautiful idea of the poet of Eden be true, that Adam gave himself up to crime and misery, to share the lot of his beloved companion, whatever it might be; but, however that may be, his sin was not the less great. Evil is not less cursed, nor does temptation less inevitably lead to ruin, because it is presented to us by a hand that is dear. Alas! why is it that human life so often exhibits over again, even in its minutest details, the scene of seduction and ruin which passed in Eden? How many beings, united by the sweetest ties, and who were destined to find in one another a support, an encouragement to faithfulness and the love of God, a consolation in the sorrows and trials of life, an instrument of blessing in the hands of their Father, have found in one another, instead of

all this, nothing but an occasion of sin and a seduction, and have drawn one another into the depths of disobedience and misery, into which they ought to have guarded one another from falling! Ah! how unhappy and guilty is that being, who thus becomes the author of the woes of his fellow traveller! And not less unhappy he who, whether from a love of sin or from a criminal deference for a beloved object, becomes unfaithful to his God, "loves and serves the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for evermore." My brethren, you whom God has united upon earth by ties of blood or of friendship; you, especially christian husbands and wives, avoid both these evils, both these crimes. Let the remembrance of the sin of Eden be engraven upon your hearts! Live to love one another; but, above all, be faithful to your God; let love to Him sanctify your love to each other; let obedience to His laws be the foundation of your affection; convinced that all attachment of which God is not the bond, is but a source of pollution and of bitterness.

Has then the sovereign of creation, he who was the image of God, fallen? He has just

committed, in concert with the companion whom God gave him, the first sin that defiled the earth which we inhabit!

But it will be asked, is this the whole of Adam's sin, that sin of which so much is said, which occupies so large a place in the theology of Jews and Christians, that sin upon which so many volumes have been written, and to which are ascribed all the woes of humanity? Can a sin, in itself so insignificant, have been attended with consequences so terrible?

This objection comes solely from our ignorance of the nature of sin. It is only from the Word of God that we learn the real nature of good and evil. What that word commands is good; what that word forbids is evil, in an absolute sense, and independently of the object of good and evil. Such, to Christians, is the only rule of morality. In fact, God claims to reign as a sovereign over the hearts and wills of all His creatures endowed with understanding and affections, as He reigns by His power over the whole extent of the universe. But by what means does He manifest to His creatures His sovereign will? Solely by His word. When He has spoken, man knows his duty; his dependance and

responsibility are clearly revealed to him. Now, if he obeys that word, if he continues in a state of dependance, if he maintains his responsibility, he does well, he is in order. But if, trampling under foot that word, he aspires at a proud independence, renounces his responsibility, and violates the established order, then he enters upon a life of crime and rebellion, he becomes guilty of treason against God, he breaks the bonds which united him to his Creator, he withdraws himself from under the dominion of his Maker, to deliver himself up to the dominion of another, namely, of a world at enmity with God; or of the devil, the enemy of man; or of his own selfishness and pride, which he places upon the throne of his heart, where God ought to reign.

Thus sin is in the heart and in the will, independently of the object of sin. A thing may appear to me indifferent, or even good, which I ought to abstain from with fear, if God has placed upon it the anathema of His word.

Such, my brethren, was the sin of Adam. We must not seek the cause of it in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; that was

but the occasion of the crime, because God, for reasons unknown to us, had attached to it His command. We must seek sin in the heart and the will of our first parents. It was for this reason I made you observe, that from the moment that Eve had conceived the desire to violate the order given her, she had sinned, she was criminal. Learn, then, to know the nature of sin, which is an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. Remember, that "God seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord judgeth the hearts." Hear the Apostle Paul giving us, in a single sentence, a definition of Adam's sin. It consisted in the *disobedience of one man, by which many were made sinners.* *Disobedience*, this was the sin. And observe, that the temptation bore especially upon this point, as we have seen in our preceding meditation. Evil began in Eden, the moment our first parents ceased to believe the command of God, and the sanction of death which was annexed to it. Unbelief was the root of all moral evil; it led to pride, and a contempt of the divine law, and then to a positive violation of its command. Know, then, O you, who live in habitual alienation from

God, you whose heart and will, and affections and thoughts, are not habitually in subjection to God and His word, know that, were you the most honest persons in the world, were you free from any express violation of the laws of God, you are yet, by the mere fact that your heart is estranged from God, and uninfluenced by His word, in a state of habitual sin; every moment of your life, every beating of your heart, is sin! Far, then, from being astonished at the severity with which Adam's sin was punished, because it appears to us unimportant in itself, let us draw from hence a totally different conclusion; let us learn, from the terrible chastisement of sin, what those actions are in the sight of God, which we, in our ignorance, call trifling sins, slight faults, mere weaknesses. Ah! it is because we are born in sin, that we thus view transgressions committed against the Majesty of the Most High, and against the holiness of God. What! must our violations of the holy laws of God be great crimes, even in the eyes of men, to merit His indignation and the strokes of His justice?

But enough of reasoning. Let us acknowledge, with Calvin, that God alone is a com-

petent judge of the sin committed in Eden, because He alone could know its nature and its enormity. He punished it with the most terrible chastisements. His word traces back to that sin, the origin of the evil that pollutes the earth, and of the miseries under which it groans. And who is there that will lift up to heaven a proud front, and say to God, "that He is not just when He speaks, nor pure when He judges?"* O Lord, our God! from amid the misery and bitterness of sin, will we rather cry unto Thee, "Thou art just when Thou condemnest, just when Thou cursest!" Far from rising up against the judgment of the Almighty, estimate the greatness of the sin, by the terrible greatness of its consequences! O frightful day, when sin provoked the justice of the King of saints, sullied a pure world, corrupted the heart of man, which was created to love God, clouded with darkness the heavenly light of Eden, and spread curse and misery over a mourning world! O Adam! O sovereign of the creation! Methinks I see thee tasting the bitterness of thy sin, shedding tears of blood over the

* Psalm li. 4.

loss of that crown of innocence and glory which adorned thy now polluted and confounded brow! For the first time thou bedewest with thy tears that beautiful soil of Eden, from which thou art about to part for ever, with the favour of thy God. But what would have been thy grief and thy despair, if thou couldst have seen all future generations ingulfed in the abyss of sin and death, which thou hadst created; if thou couldst have seen, beforehand, that pestilential cloud of iniquity which each successive age sends up to heaven, as a testimony of condemnation; if thou couldst have heard the sighs, and seen the sufferings and woes of each generation of men; if thou couldst have heard the groaning of creation "made subject to vanity;" if thou couldst have seen the ravages and disorders of sin, which finds no remedy save in the death of the eternal Son of God; if thou couldst have seen the merciful Redeemer, expiring under the strokes of divine justice, and in the agonies of the second death; if thou couldst have heard the echo of the fearful trumpet of judgment, which shall put an end to all things present; if thou couldst have witnessed the endless, boundless torments of the damned . .

My beloved brethren, I stop before these depths; we have spoken enough of Adam's sin; let us now speak of our own sins. Ah! let us remember that, if we suffer for the sin that defiled the earth, it is for our own sins we shall be condemned. Let us remember, that if "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, that death hath reigned over all men, *for that all have sinned.*" *All have sinned!* This is what the word of eternal truth declares to us; this is what our conscience cries to us; this is what every glance which we cast at our own life proclaims to us. O let us feel, let us deplore our sins with as much grief, regret, bitterness, and repentance, as Adam must have felt, when he was banished from Eden! Let us weep over our miseries; let us trample under foot that odious pride which would hide them from our eyes, and keep us from repentance, humiliation, and the feeling of our tremendous responsibility. Let us reject with horror the insinuation of the perfidious enemy, who tells us, *Ye shall not die*, and promises us, as he did to Eve, the fatal recompense of pride and contempt of the divine law. Let us humble ourselves together before our God; then . . .

Oh, happiness! after having shown the evil, we can, on the part of God, offer you the remedy. Happy ministers of the new covenant, we can, we ought to direct your thoughts and your hopes, no longer to Eden, closed against you, and under a curse, but to Calvary, where "dies for us the second Adam," where rises the tree of life, where "the blood of Christ speaketh to us better things than the blood of Abel." There, my brethren, you who believe in the Son of God for life, there, on our behalf, a blessing succeeds to the curse, pardon to chastisement, life to death. Hear this substitution of grace for chastisement proclaimed by the Word of God; "For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. But, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that, as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."*

* Rom. v. 15. 19—21.

This day, another voice is once more lifted up in this house of God, to proclaim to us this cheering and precious truth. This day, the great Repairer of sin offers Himself to us, with all the fruits of His sacrifice, and His death, pardon, the riches of His grace, and the treasures of eternal life.* Immortal beings, sinful men, hasten, while life is offered to you, lay hold on life! O house of Israel, why will ye die!

Thanks and praise unto Thee, O my God, for having found so effectual a remedy for our woes! Praise unto Thee for bringing to us blessing and life, instead of condemnation and death. Praise unto Thee for having drawn us out of the depths of misery, to make us objects of Thine infinite compassion, children of Thy love, and heirs of eternal happiness!

* This Discourse was preached on a Sacrament Sunday.

MEDITATION IV.

MAN A SINNER.—THE VOICE OF THE LORD.—GOD IS SLOW TO ANGER.

GEN. III. 7—10.

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden; and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."

THERE is not, perhaps, in the paths of crime, a more dreadful moment than that which immediately follows one of those actions, which call down upon their author the whole vengeance of the law. The crime is committed; the blood has flowed under the murderous hand; all the powers of the universe are not

sufficient to repair the evil which a moment has effected. The torments of remorse agitate the breast of the criminal, who abhors his deed; the frightful consequences which it brings after it, assail, like phantoms, his imagination, scared with gloomy terrors, and already, perhaps, showing him in the distance the horrid instrument of an ignominious death. Such now appear to us the first man and his companion, lately so happy, but whom we have seen trampling under foot the solemn command of God, and calling down upon their guilty heads the terrible sanction of that command, death! Are we now called to the painful task of unfolding to you, this day, this sentence of malediction? Is it going to fall, like a thunder-clap, upon man after his sin? No! we have to acknowledge, in all things, a God "slow to anger."

His justice offended, He will not hold the sinner guiltless; but He is pleased to leave sin time to produce its bitter fruits, that man, humbled for his crime and his folly, may have the time and the desire to see, through the gloomy cloud which shuts up within it the maledictions of the Most High, a ray of hope that may encourage him, and lead him

penitently to the feet of his Judge, ever ready to pardon. Let us consider, under this point of view, the first consequences of the fall. Let us contemplate man in his sin and in his folly; God as a Judge, in His just anger; finally, God as a Father, in His tender solicitude.

The promise of the seducer is accomplished, alas! too well accomplished, but very differently from what Adam expected. Such is the character of the father of lies, that even when one of his purposes or promises is accomplished to the letter, it conceals beneath it falsity and deception. *Your eyes shall be opened*, he had said to our first parents; ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. It is unnecessary to say, that these words of the tempter do not refer to the eyes of the body, which were always open to the light of heaven, and to the contemplation of the magnificent works of the Creator. The meaning of this deceitful promise was, that by the violation of the command of God, man's understanding, raised to a higher degree of superiority, would know by experience good and evil, and would be able to sound, like the Divinity Himself, all the mys-

teries of the moral world. The end to be attained was apparently noble; our first parents, who would have despised a carnal temptation, fell, as we have already seen, into the subtle snare. But it was not long before the fatal result brought to light the real purpose of the seducer. *Their eyes were*, indeed, *opened* .... to their sin, their misery, their utter ruin. They knew good and evil: good, by a sad contrast with evil; evil, by fatal experience. Previous to their fall, they had no idea of evil, no more than a man, plunged in a life altogether carnal and material, can have an idea of a spiritual life in God. Sin at first was not presented to them in all its native deformity, but under seducing colours. Now they taste its bitterness; they know it to their cost; they are left to deplore the subtlety of the enemy and their own folly.

This, and indeed every other part of the experience of our first parents in Eden, is repeated every day among the unhappy children of Adam. Six thousand years of crime and misery have not taught them to distrust their perfidious enemy. Each purchases, at the price of his sins and the woes they entail,

the fatal knowledge of good and evil. Sin, of whatever kind it be, presents itself with the most alluring attractions; it seems to meet a devouring want of a corrupt heart; it promises it the happiness which it pants after, the enjoyments which it ardently desires to possess. A thick bandage covers the eyes of the hapless individual, who rushes to his ruin. He surrenders himself up to the powerful inclination which hurries him along, as a savage beast rushes upon his prey. Alas! scarcely has he tasted the fatal fruit, when the bandage falls off, his eyes are opened, all is changed. The charm is dissolved, and a long and painful disappointment ensues. That which was invested with such seducing attractions, is now nothing but bitterness; sorrow and misery fill a heart which imagined that it was in possession of happiness; the curse which is indissolubly attached to sin, is the only heritage of him who promised himself so much enjoyment. Never is a man more sadly disabused or more miserable in himself, than when he has just committed an action condemned by the law of his God, unless, at least, he be sunk in demoralization to the level of the devils, whose cursed lot it is to rejoice in evil.

But such could not have been the state of the first man and his unhappy companion; they are about to bear, as their first punishment, all the shame of their sin. *Their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked.* They knew! .... but did they not know it before? Doubtless; but as "to the defiled, nothing is pure, so to the pure, all things are pure." The words of Genesis which immediately precede the history of the fall, afford us an explanation of these, and describe to us better than any thing else, the perfect innocence and purity of primitive man: "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed." Like truth, which has been represented naked, to give us an idea of the purity of its attractions, our first parents, until sin had poured over them its poison, saw in the majestic beauty of person, with which God had endowed them, no motive for shame. And this is the feature of the Divine image, which we trace most faithfully in the young child, which has not yet had the misfortune to feel the seeds of that corruption which is natural to us, develope themselves within him, and whose purity and innocence sin has not yet withered by

its impure breath. What a charm does this ignorance of evil, which keeps aloof shame, the offspring of sin, shed over infancy! Why should the tender infant, whom you love to press to your heart, be ashamed of its nudity? It has not yet sinned! Oh! who has not regretted those days of childhood, the remembrance of which still sometimes returns to soothe the miseries inseparable from a world which lieth in wickedness! Who has not shed bitter tears over the loss of that ignorance of evil, which allowed us to indulge, without distrust and with happy feelings, in enjoyments in which, at a later period, we find at every step the poison of sin!

Man, as he came forth from the hands of his God, possessed this innocence, this purity of heart, which nothing had as yet sullied. Perhaps also the body, with which God had clothed him, partook of the glory and beauty of the Divine image which adorned his soul; the Father of lights had perhaps invested with a halo of celestial brightness the creature of His love. "He had crowned him," the Scripture tells us, "with glory and honour." The "glorious body," with which the elect of God

shall be clothed by the power of Him who hath repaired the disorders of the fall and of sin, shall probably be but the restoration of that body, which the immortal being, created by God, the Sovereign of the universe, possessed. He was not naked; he was crowned with glory and honour.

But, O fatal consequences! O curse of sin! From the moment Adam had tasted it, the germ of death, which is its wages, began to develope itself in his body; he was despoiled of his crown of glory and of his majestic beauty. His body, doomed henceforth to corruption, was bowed down to the earth. His innocence was withered by the envenomed breath of sin, as the flower loses its freshness and its perfume under the blast of a pestilential wind. Lust took the place of innocence; the impure language of the senses was heard, became imperious, introduced disorder into his heart, called into it passion, which consumes the soul, subjected it to its tyrannical yoke, and filled it with poison. Adam looks at his companion; Eve scarcely dares to return that look: the confusion of shame covers with crimson blushes their foreheads, which lately beamed with the pure lustre of

innocence. .... *They knew that they were naked.*

To what a miserable remedy they have recourse! *They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons!* Had Adam and Eve been surprised by some furious enemy, whose murderous strokes they could not have escaped of themselves, had they been exposed to the most terrible dangers, had they been threatened by the most frightful catastrophe which imagination could conceive, their misery would not have been without hope; their first cry would have been sent up to their Creator, their powerful Friend, their Father; and they would have thrown themselves into His arms, stretched out to receive, protect, and save them. But sin—sin, like a hideous monster, interposes itself between man and his God, makes him see an enemy in Him whom he loved above all things, isolates him, despoils him, places him trembling between heaven and hell, and plunges him into hopeless wretchedness. For the sinner there is no more a Father in heaven; there is there but an Avenger and a Judge. Hence Adam has not recourse to his God; he no longer knows if he shall find grace and mercy with

Him; he flees from Him. He has recourse to a miserable expedient; he covers the shame of his nakedness and his crime with a few despicable fig leaves; he hides himself among the trees of Eden! What a protection against the shame of sin! What a security against the curse which follows it! What a refuge from the strokes of divine justice!

The more we advance, the more are we constrained to admire the strict truth of these portraitures of sin and the woes which follow it, though Moses has transmitted them to us in the simple and child-like language of the age which they represent. Know ye, O poor sinners, who now hear me, know ye those frail and miserable fig leaves with which our first father sought to hide his shame and his sin? Yes, ye know them; ye act in the same manner yourselves; your first impulse after a fall, your first desire is to hide your sin and the shame of your nakedness, to bury it in darkness far from all observation, and even, if it were possible, far from the observation of Him "whose eyes are as a flame of fire," forgetting that to Him "darkness and light are both alike." Ye also know these fig leaves, ye proud and self-righteous sinners, who, having

lost the garments of the innocence and glory of your first origin, seek to cover your nakedness with the filthy rags of your own righteousness, your own honesty, your own merits and good opinion of yourselves! We laugh, says the great Calvin, at the folly of Adam, and do the same thing ourselves. What, in fact, is that pharisaical legality, or that regret without true repentance and conversion, or those works which, like wild fruits, have not grown upon the tree of the love of God, have not been produced by the sap of a sanctifying communion with him? What are those benevolent actions which proceed not from a heart converted to God, but are tacked to the exterior of the life, like the leaves with which Adam and Eve sought to cover their nakedness? My brethren, such means of salvation shall no more stand in the day of judgment, they shall no more cover our sins, than the leaves with which Adam clothed himself, hid his nakedness from the eyes of God. Renounce, then, these delusive means of appearing before the Lord your Judge. Say rather, with Job, while at the same time you clothe yourselves with his uprightness and with his humility, "I have not covered my transgres-

sion, like Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom." Hear rather for your instruction the address of the Saviour to one of the churches of Asia: "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

The Lord comes forth to judgment; His look searches the heart. His voice shakes the earth! Adam hears it echo in the fields of Eden; and at that voice, lately so cheering, so agreeable to the creature of God, at that voice, which was wont to fill his heart with a thrill of pleasure, and to assure him of the favour of his Creator, at that voice he now trembles in his inmost soul, he flees in alarm, and hides himself, forgetting that "there is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves." Ah! that which invests sin with so much terror is, that it cannot be concealed; it must come to light. "Whither shall we go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and flee into the uttermost parts of

the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me!"* "I heard Thy voice," said Adam, "and was afraid, because I was naked, and hid myself."

Ah! it was because the voice of the Lord, which now was heard in Eden, was not that voice which had pronounced that every thing was good, and had blessed its happy creature. The voice of the Lord comes this time "*with the wind of the day,*† *walking in the garden.*" The generality of interpreters see in these words, simply an intimation of that breeze which is felt in the morning and in the dusk of the evening. But do they not rather imply, that the voice of the Lord is borne upon the wings of a tempestuous wind, which now for the first time howls through the groves of Eden? "He maketh the *winds* his messengers, his ministers a flaming fire."‡ "The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty; the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire;

* Ps. cxxxix. 7—11. † See marginal reading.
‡ Ps. civ. 4. See Heb. i. 7.

the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness." Scarcely has sin polluted the earth, when all nature is filled with gloomy terror. The disordered elements proclaim the violation of that harmony, which prevailed between the creature and the Creator. The impetuosity of the wind batters and uproots the plants which adorned Eden, blasts their balmy flowers, despoils them of their fresh verdure and of their delicious fruits. Dark and menacing clouds overcast an atmosphere charged with the displeasure of the Most High, which frequent flashes of lightning fearfully express. Guilty man has fled, and sought in vain a refuge amid the trees of the garden.

Always, my brethren, always shall the voice of the Lord be heard against sin. Ever since that solemn day when God placed man in a state of responsibility from which he can never escape, the voice of the Lord has been heard against all sin, and never will it let it pass unpunished. Ever since that solemn day when God proclaimed His holy law from Mount Sinai, amid thunderings and lightnings, and clouds, and earthquake, and annexed to it this sanction: "Cursed is every

one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them," the voice of the Lord has been heard against every violation of that law, pronouncing its malediction. And if that terrible voice comes not upon the wings of the wind, as in Eden, where Adam trembled when no one accused him, it is heard in the recesses of a guilty conscience, where it echoes by anticipation the tremendous sentence which it shall pronounce at the last day. If Adam flees from the voice of God before it accuses him, what shall we do in "that great and terrible day of the Lord, when the elements being on fire shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and when the Judge of the Universe, coming in His glory with all His holy angels, shall take vengeance on all them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?" What shall the voice of the Lord then be against sin, and what shall be the despair of those, who, wishing, like Adam, to flee, and not being able, shall say unto the mountains, Fall upon us, and unto the rocks, Hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!

Shall the voice of the Lord, then, be silent against sin? No, my brethren, no; never, never! It will follow down into the lowest depths of the place of reprobation those who shall have despised that voice when it proclaimed mercy and pardon, and it will be in their remembrance, the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched. Sin is an indelible stain upon an immortal soul, unless it be washed away by the blood of the New Covenant, which cleanseth from all sin.

Yet after having caused His fearful voice to be heard in Eden, the Lord speaks to ruined man. He calls him. If it be to bring him to judgment, what will become of a creature who hath failed to fulfil the end of his being, and, in a manner, frustrated the design of God? How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim! How shall I deliver thee, O Israel! Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger; I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God, and not man; the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee. No, the Lord does not utterly destroy His guilty creature; He does not yet

even pronounce against him the sentence of condemnation, which He afterwards utters as "the wages of sin." He does not abandon man to his own misery; He pities his deplorable condition; He wills that he should be constrained to acknowledge Him, even in His judgments, as a God "slow to anger."

Where art thou? saith the Lord to Adam, covered with confusion, and not yet repentant, *where art thou?* O my creature, O sovereign of this universe, into what a gulf of misery thou hast precipitated thyself! Thou, whom I loved, thou wast so happy in communion with Me, *where art thou?* Thou who wast clothed with majesty and innocence, thou on whose brow I had planted a ray of mine own glory, where art thou? How great is thy disgrace! How great the bitterness of thy remorse! What a voice, my brethren, what a voice of mercy! How calculated to make the two guilty inmates of Eden look within themselves, to show them the depth of their fall, and to lead them, humbled and repenting, to the feet of their Creator, to see if they might find grace and pardon with Him!

And you, my beloved brethren, you who have all likewise sinned, have you never

heard that voice? The Lord has not yet pronounced against you a sentence of condemnation; He is not willing to abandon you either to your own misery; He comes to you; He seeks you; He calls you by His word, and by a thousand means; He says to you, even this moment, by my feeble voice, *where art thou?*—Yes, where art thou? thou who hast so often sinned against thy God, violated His laws, despised His word, and hast never yet taken sackcloth and ashes to weep over thy sins; who hast never yet supplicated thy divine Redeemer to receive thee in His mercy? *Where art thou?* On the edge of a precipice, with a sentence of eternal condemnation suspended over thy head, and thou awaitest the fatal day with a mad indifference! Where art thou, thou who receivedst from thine infancy, through the care of a pious father, or of a tender mother, religious impressions, which should have bound thee to thy God, and hast been so unhappy as to let thyself be taken in the snares of a sinful world, and drawn into ruin by the torrent of vice? *Where art thou*, thou who, disgusted with the world, its bitter pleasures, its deceitful joys, hast never yet

sought in God, and in the Saviour's cross, the peace and happiness which the world cannot give, and the only remedy for the agonizing wounds of thy heart? *Where art thou*, young man, young woman, who art madly pursuing after vanity, consumed by desires which shall never be satisfied, and cradled in hopes which shall ever be disappointed? *Where art thou*, unhappy old man, who bearest upon thy hoary head the traces of many years spent amid miseries over which thou hast groaned, without ever having learned true wisdom? All who now hear me, all of us who are here before God, let us answer, let us banish delusions; *where are we?* Where are we as to God, as to our own souls, as to heaven, as to eternity?

O, may we listen to that voice, while God is addressing it to us in His mercy! May we, like Adam, open our eyes to our miserable state! Yes, may we feel the same shame and the same terror; though a blush were to mount up upon our humbled front, and accuse us before the eyes of the universe; though the voice of the Lord were to make us tremble to the very bottom of our soul, God grant that we may see ourselves as we

are! I would rather, a thousand times, see you blush with shame, or tremble with terror, than see you sink into a guilty and lukewarm indifference, or lulled in a vague profession of Christianity, without life, and without power.—My God, I ask Thee, if it must be so, let the blush of shame, and the trembling of terror, be witnesses of our humiliation, and of our repentance!

My brethren, if God hear this prayer, if ye learn to know yourselves before Him, if your eyes be opened, ah! have not recourse to the miserable expedients which we have pointed out, to cover your shame; and when you have seen all your nakedness before God, may you chaunt with the prophet this song of redemption: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garment of salvation, and covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels!"*

* Isa. lxi. 10.

MEDITATION V.

THE INTERROGATORY.—THE EXCUSES.

GEN. III. 11—13.

"And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

SIN, as we have already seen, has been introduced into Eden; the voice of the Lord has been lifted up against this violation of the established order of the moral world. Guilty man has fled in trepidation—fled from the presence of his God. But in vain does he hope, under the pretence of hiding his nakedness, to hide his sin and his shame. He must appear before Him who searcheth the heart;

he must give an account of this very shame which he feels; he must confront the law which he has violated. A solemn tribunal is erected; the righteous Judge questions His creature as to the use which he has made of his liberty, his innocence, and his responsibility. He must answer; that which is hidden must be brought out to the light of day.

My brethren, let us approach into the presence of God, let us hear his interrogations. They have been recorded for our instruction; they concern every one of us, inasmuch as they contain the basis of that judgment to which we shall all be subjected, and the chief heads of that indictment which shall be brought against us.

The interrogatory of the Judge and the answers of the accused shall successively occupy our attention.

"I heard Thy voice and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." Such were the words of Adam, troubled in his conscience by the approach of God—words which at once betray his crime and his confusion. Already the unhappy criminal feels the misery of sin, already he trembles at the voice of God, whose presence but lately was his happiness;

he is conscious of the sin which he has committed, and he already begins to suffer its first consequences; but he does not yet acknowledge the *moral* nature of his action; he does not admit his guilt; he speaks of his fear and of his nakedness. Averting his regards from his own heart, he foolishly seeks the reasons of his present condition, out of himself. It is necessary, then, that he should be brought before the tribunal of his conscience, in order to be reminded of his responsibility, of the divine command which he has violated, of the holiness of the law which he has trampled under foot, of the moral evil which has defiled his heart, in a word, of the real cause of what he now feels in the presence of God. And such is the object of the two questions which his Judge addresses to him. "Who told thee that thou wast naked?" or how is it that this nakedness is now a cause of shame to thee? Wast thou not clothed with innocence, with light, and with glory? Didst thou not bear the image of thy God, in whom thou gloriedst? Didst thou not rejoice in all the faculties which He had given thee? Why, then, art thou despoiled, covered with shame, and miserable? Hast thou sullied the garment

of innocence and purity which I bestowed upon thee? Hast thou lost the crown with which I adorned thy brow? Who, then, hath reduced thee to this state? "Who told thee that thou wast naked?"

Adam is confounded and speechless before his Judge. It is necessary, then, to deepen the conviction which he feels in his troubled conscience. It is necessary to give him a nearer view of the evil which he has committed, by putting to him a still more home question. It is necessary to set full before his eyes the mirror of the divine law. "Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" My brethren, what instructive lessons does this simple question contain! Let us pause here for a moment, and direct our thoughts to this important subject.

And, first, remark that God, in order that "He might be justified even when He condemned," with a condescension which was intended to redound to His own glory, pronounces no curse, nor even a sentence of condemnation upon man, until He has first convicted him in his own conscience. In the day of great account there shall not be one

among the reprobate that shall not proclaim before the whole universe the justice and holiness of his Judge; not one cry which they shall utter, that shall not turn to the glory of the divine perfections. And you, too, my brethren, my fellow sinners, whom I am now addressing, however ungodly you may be, however deeply you may be sunk in depravity, in pride, and contempt of God, you, too, shall all eternally contribute to the glory of the Most High, either in spite of yourselves, by proclaiming the justice of your condemnation, if you continue in your impenitence, or by your everlasting felicity, if you turn to the Lord while there is yet time.

But this condescension of the Lord towards man was also intended to subserve the happiness of the creature, by leading him to repentance, and, through repentance, unto salvation. If the thunders of divine justice descend not upon the criminal to destroy him the moment he has sinned; if the earth opens not its mouth to swallow him up; if his Judge allows him time and speaks to him in a manner calculated to lead him to repentance, it is a miracle of grace, and a proof that God already has designs of mercy and purposes of

redemption towards His creature. Ah! blessed be God, "the Lamb has been slain from the foundation of the world."

The Lord, by the questions which He puts to Adam, confronts him with His holy law. Man, the sinner, will then no longer be able to withhold the confession of his guilt, under the plea of ignorance. "I commanded thee," saith his Judge, "thou knewest thy duty, the full extent of thy responsibility, even the tremendous sanction of the law and the penalty of its violation." If, then, Adam perish, it is his own fault. If he already hears the distant thunders of the malediction of his God, it is he himself that has called them down upon his own head. And is there one sinner among us of whom we may not say the same? Is there an action of our life, condemned by the law of God, of which we can affirm that we have committed it through ignorance—we, before whose eyes the light of divine revelation shines in all its splendour—we, who are more privileged than any other nation under heaven by the clear and certain knowledge of our duty, our responsibility, and of the will and word of our God?

But the Almighty, in reminding man in so

solemn a manner of the command which He had given him, designed not merely to lead him to confess that he had sinned knowingly and willingly, and that he had made no account of his awful responsibility, but also to show him the real nature of his sin. In a preceding meditation, we endeavoured to point out wherein the sin of Adam consisted. To establish the explanation which we there gave of the subject, it would be sufficient merely to refer to the investigation which we are now considering: "Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" I gave thee a command, hast thou violated it? This is sin—the violation of the law of God, disobedience, rebellion. That sin would have been the same, in point of nature, whatever had been the object of the command. For us, as well as for Adam, for every responsible being, sin is simply that which is opposed to the divine law. Thus God himself has defined it by the mouth of the Apostle John: "Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." The sinner, in violating and despising the Word of God, infringes upon the harmony of the moral

world, and introduces disorder among the works of the Almighty Creator. What, then, was more calculated to make Adam feel the nature and enormity of his sin, than the solemn question addressed to him by his Judge?

While Adam was in a state of innocence, the law was given to him to place him under responsibility, and to prevent the commission of sin; when he became guilty, it served to show him his sin, as in a mirror, in which he might contemplate all its deformity. My brethren, we also have a law, and, with reference to us, it serves the same end. To awaken our consciences, to teach us what we owe to God, to impress our hearts with a feeling of our responsibility, to show us sin in all its frightful hideousness, and to denounce against the sinner a punishment from which nothing can save him, except the work of Christ on Calvary; such is the end of the law. "By the law," St. Paul tells us, "is the knowledge of sin. I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet. Now we know that what the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be

stopped, and all the world become guilty before God."

What overwhelming conviction must have seized the soul of guilty Adam, when he heard the Lord thus recalling to his mind the law which he had violated! And what would be our feelings in the presence of that law, when we hear it pronounced in the house of God, from Sabbath to Sabbath, were our hearts less under the influence of pride and spiritual blindness!

But, however we may view this law of our God, let us learn, from the examination to which Adam was subjected, that it is by it we shall be judged; that it is this law which shall be held up to us at the bar of our eternal Judge, as it was to Adam, in Eden; that it is by this law that every action of our life, from the time we first began to think till the moment when we go down to the grave, shall be tried; and, finally, that it is in the balance of this law that our most secret actions and the slightest movements of our hearts shall be weighed. My brethren, do you, then, wish rightly to estimate your moral value; do you wish to know, beforehand, the judgment which shall decide your eternity? Take not for your

standard the principles of a worldly morality, nor the corrupt principles of a world sunk in iniquity. But take the law of God—that law which claims the regulation, not merely of all our actions, but of all our thoughts and motives, and even of the most secret desires of our hearts. Take that law, I say, measure yourselves by it, try your moral stature by every part of it, judge yourselves, and declare the result!

The question addressed to the woman, in reference to her sin, is more simple; it supposes her already convicted; it is but the reproach which precedes condemnation. "Wherefore hast thou done this?" or how is it that thou hast committed such a deed? Didst thou not know the guilt and danger of it? Hadst thou forgotten the command of thy God? Was the duty of obedience and fidelity not prescribed to thee with sufficient plainness? Hadst thou no fear of thy Creator before thine eyes? Did the awful sanction with which He accompanied His law, make no impression upon thy soul? or, in the absence of fear, wast thou a stranger to love? Were all the benefits with which I had enriched thee, not sufficient to gain thy heart? Wast thou not completely

happy? And oughtest thou to have preferred the allurements of temptation to the pleasures of communion with Me? Yet thou hast disobeyed Me; thou hast committed sin; "Wherefore hast thou done this?"

Who would not have expected to see Adam now plunged in the deepest humiliation? Who would not have thought, that his bleeding heart would at this moment have groaned under the agonizing pangs of the most poignant contrition? The presence of a holy and just God, ever formidable to the sinner, the thought of His favour which he has now forfeited, together with peace and happiness, the overwhelming accusations of God against His guilty creature, the remembrance of the violated law, the interrogations of the Supreme Judge, so calculated to awaken in the conscience of Adam a clear knowledge and painful feeling of his sin, the first bitter fruit of his crime, which he already begins to taste; the shame, the remorse, the misery, above all, the thought of having offended a God who had given him so many proofs of his love, of having trampled under foot His law, and despised His word—all these considerations, one might have supposed, would wring from the depths

of his soul this cry of repentance: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of Thy mercies blot out my transgressions. Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this great evil in Thy sight. Hide Thy face from my sins and blot out mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Doubtless this cry of grief, this earnest supplication, will find utterance from the heart of guilty Adam, and ascend even to the mercy-seat of the Most High, to obtain for the sinner, if it be possible, grace and pardon . . . . .

No, my brethren, no! Pride has been born! blind pride has thrown its fatal veil over the eyes of him who aspired to know good and evil; hateful pride has puffed up and hardened his heart! The worm of the earth resists his Creator; the sinner resists his Judge. Already he feels the effects of his sin—nakedness, shame, fear, and misery; he does not deny his crime; he admits it; and yet he acknowledges not that he is guilty; he seeks not in himself, in his own heart, the cause of his sin; he takes not to himself the blame of his fall. He endeavours to find,

out of himself, among those around him, some being on whom he may lay it. And who is it he fixes on? "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me" . . . . Eve . . . . Have I heard aright? What! his beloved companion, her whom he lately loved so dearly, her whom God had given him, who, by participating in, had enhanced his happiness, had added double charms to his abode in Eden, and multiplied the joy of his blissful existence; her whom he ought to have protected, at the risk of his own life, against all dangers; upon her he throws all the blame, all the fault of his sin! Yes, and if the sentence pronounced against sin must be executed, let it strike Eve, Adam accuses her! If the maledictions and thunders of Divine Justice must reach the author of sin, let them fall upon Eve, Adam accuses her! If endless misery must be the deplorable consequence of the fall, let Eve drink, even to the dregs, the bitter cup, Adam accuses her! My brethren, behold sin, corrupting the most intimate and the purest affections. See that monstrous selfishness, which withers in the root the most generous feelings of the heart, brought into existence, and become the mov-

ing principle of human life! Let all around me be humbled and confounded, so that my pride be satisfied! Let even that which I most love be stricken before my eyes, so that I escape! Let all perish, so that I live!

But this is not all. Let us penetrate deeper into the mystery of pride and folly. Adam does not rest in throwing the blame of his crime upon his wife; he endeavours to fasten it upon God himself. "The woman," saith he, "whom *Thou* gavest to be with me" . . . What! the companion whom God had given him to complete his happiness, saying, "It is not good that man should be alone;" the being who was destined to unite with him in loving, adoring, and worshipping the same God—that God who had surrounded him with so much felicity; Eve is now, in the mouth of guilty man, a subject of reproach to his God! If we have seen, that from selfishness to hatred, there is but one step, we now see that hatred, pushed on by pride, never fails to pour forth blasphemy! What an awful fall! What deplorable effects of sin!

Eve, interrogated in her turn, soon displays the same disposition as her husband, and shows that her heart also is corrupted by sin.

She accuses the instrument of the temptation, as if the temptation was necessarily followed by a fall, as if she had not been perfectly free, and as if it was not her duty to have rejected, with indignation, the very first doubt of the truth of God's word, which was suggested to her, the very first thought of disobeying Him that arose in her mind.

My brethren, let us cease to be astonished and indignant at the conduct of our first parents; let us rather look to ourselves, and see if we are not continually chargeable with the very same infirmities. When the Lord, by His word, or by the voice of conscience, summons us before His tribunal, and calls us to an account for our sins, and for some particular fall of which we feel the bitter fruits, what is our first movement? Is it to accuse ourselves before God, to lay our hand upon our conscience, to shut our mouth, to prostrate ourselves in the dust, and, with a broken and contrite heart, to cry, I have sinned? Ye know it, ye who have studied your own hearts, however little; answer, then! Ah! are you not constrained to confess that your first impulse is to look around you, with an anxious eye, to see if you can find some

object on which to throw the blame of your sins? Sometimes the fault is laid upon those, by whose example, words, or influence you have been drawn into sin. Sometimes it is laid upon your frailty, the strength of your passions, the force of temptation, your want of light, the education you have received, the state of society, or, what you call the impossibility of living according to the gospel. Yea, perhaps, when you have accused every thing around you, you fling your accusations, like Adam, with awful blasphemy, upon the God that created you; you say that it was He that made you what you are, that is, sinful, weak, prone to evil, the slaves of sense and of your own passions; and perhaps you even turn the gifts, the benefits, the most precious favours of God against Himself. Think you that I exaggerate, that I accuse you unjustly? Examine your own selves, contemplate human life in general, and you will be undeceived, you will be convinced that there was not a sin, nor a feature of human infirmity, exhibited in Eden after the fall, that is not displayed, in a thousand forms, in the life of every child of Adam. Do I unjustly accuse you, who, instead of blessing God for

the gifts of His providence, the prosperity which He has conferred upon you, the influence which He has given you in society, take occasion, from these things, to live in forgetfulness of God, in a proud opulence, and in worldly-mindedness; you, who, when you are spoken to about that future account which you have to give of yourselves, of your responsibility, of your whole life, polluted, as it is, with sin, immediately reply, that such is the state of society, and that God has so constituted human life, and established in the world a diversity of conditions, that you must maintain your rank, and live as Providence has placed you. Do I unjustly accuse you, who, while God has surrounded you with dear objects of affection, relations, friends, children, whom you are required to love in the Lord, making the gifts of His goodness subserve to His glory; instead of doing this, take occasion, from these things, to set the creature upon the throne of the Creator, and make so many idols of His gifts, under the plea, that the several duties of parents, children, husband and wife, and friends, are duties of the most sacred kind, duties which religion enjoins, and Providence itself has ordained

. . . . . Yes, doubtless, and so they are, provided you follow the order which God has established in the world, provided you give God the throne in your heart, provided you live for His glory, and not unthankfully to enjoy His gifts. Otherwise, you also accuse providence, and blaspheme God. Do I falsely accuse you, who have not yet returned unto your God, but live in a guilty indifference, or rather, in real enmity against *Him*, regarding neither the invitations of His grace, nor the threats of His justice, nor His benefits, which ought to melt your hearts, nor His violated law, whose voice ought to make your conscience tremble to its lowest depths; you, who, though urged by all these considerations, to return to the Lord, to fear His judgments, and to open your hearts to His love, yet refuse to hearken to the call, depending upon a vague and false idea of His goodness, persuading yourselves that His justice will not take its course, and that, because He has spared you hitherto, He will never punish you at all? Do I falsely accuse you in charging you with turning God's benefits and favours against Him, seeing that you make them a motive to continue in sin, and

despise the riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? No; you calumniate His divine patience, you blaspheme God. Thou knowest, O my God, how even the most faithful among us, without abusing Thy gifts to this degree, without openly saying, "Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound," remain, notwithstanding Thy love and Thy tender mercies, yea, perhaps, because of Thy mercies, far below what we ought to attain to! And would this be the case, if we did not take occasion from Thy long-suffering, to show ourselves ungrateful to the best of parents, slothful in Thy service, and unmindful of Thy glory? Ah! Lord, we would, at least, take to ourselves the shame of our ingratitude. Humble us Thyself, humble us, and afterwards, in Thine infinite mercy, raise us up again!

My brethren, we have all a thousand reasons to be abased in the dust before God. Like Adam, we have known the holy law of our Creator; like Adam, we have violated that law knowingly and wilfully. Will you be so infatuated, as to refuse to listen to

the judgment which the voice of God pronounces in your conscience, and to endeavour to evade, by vain excuses, the solemn examination to which you are called? My brethren, who, among you, condemns himself? Who, among you, humbles himself? Let him hear the Word of the Lord: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." Let us "judge ourselves, and we shall not be judged of the Lord."

But, my brethren, be this the case with you or no; hear and carry home this important consideration, which I would deeply engrave upon your hearts. In a very short time there shall be a tribunal erected before heaven and earth, before angels and men, far more solemn and terrible than that at which our first parents were arraigned in Eden. Whether we be unhumbled or repenting sinners, children of the world, or children of God, we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, where our destinies for eternity shall be determined. O, who among you will have a Saviour, an Intercessor, an Advocate with the Father, at that judgment-seat, from whence there is no appeal, and where no

excuses will be admitted; that judgment-seat, at which "every mouth shall be stopped." What overwhelming conviction awaits him who shall stand there, bearing the burden of his sins! What shame! What despair! Oh, if in that day there still remained one hour, one single hour for repentance, for humiliation, for fleeing to the throne of grace! . . . . My brethren, that hour is at your disposal; it is that in which I am now speaking to you; now, now, unless you are determined to be lost, fly to Calvary! In one day, in one hour, it may be too late.

My God, save them, save all of us!

MEDITATION VI.

THE CURSE.—THE PROMISE.

GEN. III. 14, 15.

"And the Lord said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat, all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

BY various excuses, our first parents endeavoured to transfer the blame of their sin from themselves to the instrument by which they were induced to commit it. They are, however, at length, convicted, though not humbled. And now the sentence of condemnation and death, which the violated law reserves for the sinner, is about to fall upon their guilty heads. But God, to show them how hateful sin is in His sight, and also to lead them to

repentance, is pleased, first, to make His righteous indignation light upon the vile instrument of sin, and to pronounce a curse, including in its mysterious terms, an eternal blessing to the fallen race of Adam, upon him who was a murderer from the beginning. Yes, my brethren, God had determined not to destroy a guilty world, but to save it; and therefore He blesses before He curses; He points out, afar off, the remedy, before He brings upon His guilty creature all the evils to which his crime will give birth; He causes a feeble light to shine forth in a dark futurity, that man may direct towards it his uncertain footsteps, amid the deep obscurity which surrounds him.

Let us, then, with profound reverence, approach the tribunal erected in Eden, and, in the sentence of condemnation, let us endeavour to discern words of mercy and grace.

Why is the first chastisement of sin inflicted upon the vile instrument of the fall? Where is the justice of denouncing against an innocent animal the punishment which man alone ought to share with the tempter who drew him into ruin? Such are the questions which suggest themselves to the mind, on the mere

reading of our text. But, my brethren, however natural these questions, we do not pretend to answer them; and were it not that there are some considerations connected with them, which we deem it useful to lay before you, we would candidly say, *we know not*, and pass on. Is it for us to question the Lord, on the exercise which he makes of his immutable justice? Is it for man, a worm of the dust, a child of corruption—man, who ought to adore upon his knees the clemency of his righteous Judge, in not reducing him and the world on which he dwelt to nothing, the moment sin had sullied his innocence and spoiled its beauty; is it for man, I say, to stand forth as a censor, and to call the Holy God to an account for the sentence which he pronounced upon the vile instrument of a hateful sin? Did the pious Israelite demand of his legislator, the reasons why the law required that the ox or the ass, which had wounded or slain a man, should be stoned to death, though they were destitute of reason? or why the animal which had served for some infamous purpose was doomed to die? or why the sacred vessels, which had only been touched by an unclean person, were ordered

to be burned with fire? The motives for these regulations, which may well appear to our reason less rational than the condemnation of the serpent, are evident; they were intended to inspire the people of Israel with a horror of sin, by involving in one common condemnation, every thing that was in any way connected with it. It was to instruct the intelligent and moral creature, that the irrational creature was punished with death. Such, also was the design of the condemnation which we are now considering. It was to Adam, to Eve, to us all, that God addressed himself, when he spake to the serpent; it was, in fact, to fix more deeply in the hearts of the first sinners, the stings of remorse which he had already there implanted, that God punished an animal which had not sinned.

But further: every thing in this world was made for man; all the other creatures were brought into being for the purpose of embellishing his abode, of multiplying his enjoyments, and of augmenting his happiness. But now that he has sinned, all is changed; even the earth itself is to be cursed for his sake; henceforth he is doomed to find ene-

mies, dangerous enemies, in those creatures, which were intended to contribute to his happiness. The serpent, that beautiful animal, which was one of the ornaments of the abode of Adam, displaying in Eden its magnificent colours and its graceful folds, is now destined to become an object of horror to man, an enemy armed with poison, and whose bite brings death. The more beautiful it is in its kind, the more dangerous it shall be. The harmless snake is not armed with an envenomed dart, but it is also devoid of beauty; while, on the contrary, the Asiatic serpent, that whose glittering colours and beautiful folds Eve delighted to admire, and which was the instrument of the fall, now freezes our blood when we look upon it, and makes us feel a shuddering of horror, which was intended to tell the posterity of Adam, even to the last man that shall live upon this earth, "Thou hast sinned!" What a comment on the words of the Lord: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed!"

Nor do I stop here. That which appears to us incomprehensible in the condemnation of the serpent, is found in the actual state of

all the animal creation, and, as we shall see hereafter, in all nature; for every part of this beautiful abode of man is full of the effects of the fall. The serpent is not only cursed, but "cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field." You may believe, if you please, that the world came forth, as it now is, from the hands of the Creator; you may believe, if you please, that the thousands and millions of creatures, which were created to adorn Eden, could not have found subsistence, except by devouring one another!* You may believe, if you please, that it was intended that the inferior animals should show man an example of every species of vice and crime, place before his eyes a spectacle of every kind of suffering, and make him hear the deep-drawn groans of a suffering creation, which were sufficient to dispel the charm of the happiest life, and wring with anguish hearts less inured than ours, to those scenes of destruction and death, with which sin has overspread the earth! But, for our part, we would consider it an insult to God to ascribe a work like this to Him. Certainly the Apostle Paul partook not with the reasoners of this world in their

* The contrary is expressly declared in Gen. i. 30.

proud and cruel indifference for the sufferings of the creature, and the origin of these sufferings. He condescends to regard them with a look of benign compassion, even while dilating on the sublime theme of the Christian's hope: "For the earnest expectation of the creature" he says, "waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, (for the creature was made subject unto vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him that hath subjected the same,) in hope that the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now." Isaiah does not recognize, in the present state of the inferior creatures, their original constitution; for, in a prophecy, in which he casts a distant glance at those better times when the Messiah's reign shall repair the disorders of sin, he expresses a noble longing for the restoration of all things to their original state, and for the deliverance of the creature from its present bondage: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent's meat; (the special malediction

denounced in our text;) they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." Hence the sentence uttered against the serpent is not an exception in nature; it merely implies that this animal should bear a distinctive mark of the curse. We shall not here inquire whether these words, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life," authorize us to infer, that the form of the serpent was originally different from what it is at present, or whether that animal lived on a different kind of food. This question is of so little practical importance, that it may suffice for us to know, from the Word of God, that this reptile has been reduced to its present condition in consequence of a malediction of the Lord. We hasten to pass on to more important considerations suggested by our text.

We have already shown from the Scriptures, that the serpent was but an instrument in the temptation, and that the real author of evil was the devil, "the old serpent," who was "a murderer from the beginning." Now, though Moses in our text mentions only the serpent, yet we must not confine the curse exclusively to that animal, no more than the

temptation. No, it is on the real author of evil, that the first punishment of sin shall fall in all its rigour. It is from his murderous hand, and by inflicting a curse upon him, that God will rescue the prey which he imagines he has secured, and the empire which he has usurped over the creature. He shall not be allowed to continue in peaceable possession of those whom he has reduced to his subjection: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." What we are to understand by the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, how the enmity which separates them for ever from one another manifests itself, and what shall be the issue of that struggle to which this enmity has given rise, are three questions, on which we must make some observations.

The old serpent has carried off a fatal victory over the happy creature of God. The powers of hell rejoice at it. A despotic kingdom of darkness has been erected upon earth. Shall all the children of Adam become its subjects, and continue its miserable vassals? The devil, at least, will endeavour to retain

them in his power, to inspire them with that pride which goeth before a fall, to keep them from the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God. For this purpose, the same means of seduction which he employed in Eden, shall be put in requisition; namely, doubt, unbelief, ambition, contempt of God and of His word. It is under the influence of these hateful principles that the earth has been overspread with darkness, sin has multiplied its ravages, and that idolatry, the worship of the devil, has been substituted in place of the adoration of the true God. Mankind, instead of continuing united to their Creator, who is the source of life, instead of obeying Him and acknowledging no other law than that of His love, have forgotten even His very name, or remembered it only to dishonour it. "When they knew not God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened." Now, as man, in a spiritual sense, is the child of him who engenders and governs his moral life, to whom he submits himself, and whose inspirations he obeys, they who live under the influence of Satan are his children, *his seed.*

"Ye are of your father the devil," saith Jesus, to all those who resist the Spirit of God, "and the works of your father ye will do."* "O generation of vipers, (seed of the serpent) how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" "O full of all subtlety and all mischief," exclaimed St. Paul, on seeing one do the works of his father, "*thou child of the devil*, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"† "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." Here, then, we see, in the very language of Scripture, who are the seed of the "old serpent."

The whole human race, however, shall not be the prey of the devil. To the seed of the serpent the Lord opposes the seed of the woman, which includes not only all the redeemed, but more especially the great representative of fallen and delivered humanity, the second Adam, the Redeemer of the world himself. Promised in Eden, announced to the patriarchs, predicted by the prophets, He

* John viii. 44. † Acts xiii. 10.

is born of a virgin, He comes to repair the ravages of sin by making an expiation for it, and to destroy the kingdom of darkness by triumphing over it on the cross. Under this glorious Captain, anticipated or received by faith, is gathered, in all generations, a people, the children of the Most High, "who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God.*" Delivered from the condemnation of sin, and from the influence of him who for too long a time had deceived them, reinstated, according to their original destination, in the favour of God, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, they show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light." Such is the seed of the woman which God opposes to the seed of the serpent: Christ, born of a woman, clothed with human nature, and that redeemed people of which He is the Head, the first-born.

Now, these two seeds, these two people, whose existence we have established, and whom we might have described more at length, have existed and been opposed to each other at all times. There is an enmity, a

mortal enmity existing between the two kingdoms; yea, the enmity which separates them and keeps them asunder, is even a distinctive mark of their respective characters. The people of God proclaim an irreconcilable hatred to every thing belonging to the kingdom of darkness; falsehood, pride, error, sin, evil of every kind. On the contrary, the kingdom of Satan, the world, the spirit of evil, has declared against the people of God a hatred which, far from confining itself merely to temptations and to "the deceivableness of unrighteousness," whereby it seeks to draw men into ruin, oftentimes is satisfied with nothing short of the blood of the witnesses of the truth, and the horrors of the scaffold or the stake. In our day, indeed, this enmity, scarcely daring to kindle the torch of persecution, arrays itself in a proud indifference, and arms itself with sarcasm and mockery. But whatever be the form which it assumes, whatever be the means which it employs, it is the same in the hearts of all the subjects of the prince of darkness—of all those who have not learned humility and love in the school of Christ. The children of God have, at all times, been called to pass through this

fire of this enmity, and woe to him who has never experienced it! Was our great Head himself exempt from it? Do we not see Him, previous to His entering upon His ministry of reconciliation and peace, subjected to a temptation similar in every respect to that which drew our first parents into ruin? Was He not continually held up as a mark to the hatred of a world which He came to save? And, finally, was not His death a last effort of the enmity of which our text speaks? May we learn instruction from those mysterious passages of Scripture, which ascribe the Redeemer's death to the enmity of the wicked one! "Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve" . . . . . "And after the sop, Satan entered into Judas. Then Jesus said unto him, What thou doest, do quickly!" . . . . . "When I was daily in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against Me, but this is your hour, and *the power of darkness*."

Shall, then, the cross of Christ be the triumph of the serpent's seed? Shall the struggle of enmity terminate in the defeat and disgrace of the people of God and of their Head? Oh no, the power of the ser-

pent's seed is limited by these figurative terms of our text: "*Thou shalt bruise his heel.*" The efforts of thy hatred shall not reach the vital parts of the body. An abject and grovelling creature, thou shalt not rise above the foot which is destined one day to crush thee. By thy victory, thou shalt fall, and in dying, the Saviour shall trample upon death, and rescue thy victims from thine hands. Indeed, no sooner had the hour of the power of darkness passed on Calvary, than the work of the sinner's reconciliation with God was consummated. Sin was expiated, the sentence of death pronounced in Eden was annulled, the captive's bonds were broken, "Christ had destroyed the works of the devil," and "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them on the cross." "For as much, then, as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Soon the Saviour, bursting the bands of death, issues triumphantly from the grave, and ap-

cends in all His glory into the heavens, leading in His train a great multitude of captives, whom he has rescued for ever from the bondage of the devil. The church still waits the promised day of Pentecost, to see her champions shake the empire of darkness to its foundations. What do I say? She waits to be sprinkled with the blood of martyrs, to prove to the world; that henceforth, the enmity of the serpent's seed is vain. The glad tidings of salvation are proclaimed throughout the world; immortal souls pass from the slavery of Satan into the glorious liberty of the children of God; and the whole earth is promised to the triumphant arms of the Redeemer. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Then shall the heavens resound with songs of victory to Thine honour, O Thou Son of God! Then shall the praises of Thy redeemed in heaven proclaim the accomplishment of the promise made in Eden, against the enemy whom Thou hast defeated: "It shall bruise thy head!" "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard

a loud voice, saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of the brethren is cast down, which accuseth them before God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of His testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them."*

My brethren, the enmity of which we have been speaking, shall continue even unto the day of this glorious triumph. The two hostile parties shall be arrayed against each other, and shall fight even unto death. You, also, who are assembled in this house of God, are all required to take a part in this conflict. Here neutrality is impossible . . . . Say, then, say to which of these people you wish to belong? say under whose standard you wish to fight? I now unfurl among you the banner of the Saviour, and summon you, in the name of God and in the name of your own immortal interests, to come and range yourselves beneath it, if you would not be accounted ene-

* Rev. xii. 9—12.

mies of Christ, and treated accordingly. The world, on its side, unfurls among you and lifts up on high the standard of the prince of darkness. Which of these appeals will you answer? Haste, haste! time urges you. Already you hear the shouts of the combatants, which shall be succeeded by the song of victory. I repeat it again—neutrality is impossible. Accountable beings, you cannot occupy a neutral ground with regard to God. You cannot serve two masters; you must hate the one or love the other. I am aware that the part which would please you most, is that of indifference; but be not deceived; there is no such thing. Indifference towards a God, whose laws you have violated, and before whom you are in a state of condemnation, is nothing but hatred or sovereign contempt. In the view of the Saviour, who has loaded you with favours and benefits, who has so loved you as to die for you, indifference is worse than hatred. Choose then, decide whom you will love, whom you will hate. Hate God! Hate His people! Have you well considered what is implied in this? Hell is in these words. Ah! rather give your whole heart, give the whole power of your affections to a redeeming

God, the only being really worthy of your love. Herein is life, herein is happiness. And that you may be able to love Him the better, to love Him exclusively, as he seeks to be loved, proclaim an irreconcilable hatred against any thing that comes from the kingdom of darkness. Hate evil, hate sin. Mistake me not. I devote not to your hatred the *persons* of those, who have the misfortune still to be fighting under the banner of God's enemies. No; I call upon you *to hate their works*, but to love the individuals, to love them with all your heart, to pray for them, to use every means in your power to snatch them from the ruin to which they are hastening.—Lord, give us grace to draw them to Thee, by showing them much love! Lord, save them, save them ere they perish! My God! pour Thy love into our still too selfish hearts! My God! grant us to love that which Thou lovest, and to hate that which Thou hatest!

MEDITATION VII.

THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN.—THE REMEDY.

GEN. III. 16—19.

"*Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns, also, and thistles, shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field: in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*"

WE have seen the tribunal of the righteous Judge erected in Eden. Already a sentence of malediction has been pronounced upon the instrument of the fall, and upon the author

of evil himself, whose gloomy empire is doomed to be overthrown by the seed of the woman. An eternal deliverance has thus been promised to the fallen children of Adam, whom a mighty Saviour is to set free from the tyrannical yoke of the devil. But shall not the penalty of sin fall upon those who have committed it? Shall they be absolved? Will God hold the sinner guiltless? No, my brethren! Though God, in His infinite mercy, reserves for man a *spiritual* blessing, in which all shall partake who apply to themselves the admirable remedy which He has found for the evils of sin; yet sin itself shall not be left unpunished: its consequences are inevitable, because the justice of God is unchangeable as the rock of ages.

Let us then, this day, hear, with holy attention, the sentence which the Almighty pronounces upon our first parents, now fallen from His favour. And while we hear it, let us cast a glance at the present state of man, and we shall see abundant reason to confess that this curse has been executing, from generation to generation, upon the whole race of Adam. The affections of human life afford us but too conclusive an evidence of this:

they tell us, that God is faithful to His threats, as well as to His promises. But what must be our admiration of the tender mercy of our God! What must be our gratitude, if we discern, even in those innumerable evils, a salutary remedy; if, from the bottom of this bitter cup, we find a source of living water springing up unto everlasting life!

The Lord first addresses the woman, because she first had fallen by the temptation, and had drawn her husband with her into ruin. Dreadful is the sentence of which she is the unhappy subject: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception;" or, as it should rather be rendered, "the pains of thy pregnancy;" "in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." More feeble than man, the woman is doomed to find her earthly existence more replete with infirmities, sickness, and bitterness; her whole life shall tend to remind her of her sin, her fall, and the sentence of the Most High. Weak, and continually dependant, she shall not be able to escape an existence, isolated, and without object, except at the price of her liberty, and by surrendering her-

self into hands, from which she shall look for protection, but shall too often receive nothing but cruel and tyrannical treatment, bondage without affection, chains without any thing to alleviate their oppressive weight. We, who live amid the light of that divine Christianity, whose benign influence diffuses itself through all the relations of the social body, are perhaps less sensibly struck with that part of the sentence, which places woman under the dominion of her husband, though, alas! too many professing christian families could bear witness to the secret tears and groans which the tyrannical conduct of a heartless and perjured husband wrings from an unhappy wife. But look to the barbarous nations of all ages, and of all countries, which have not been blessed with the light of the gospel, and you will see woman without name, without dignity, and without enjoyment, consigned to the abject condition of a slave, the miserable sport of passion and caprice, not even enjoying, as a compensation for her privations, the painful consolations of maternal love, because she is allowed scarcely any influence over the fruit of her womb, and from her ignorance, she is incapable of following

their moral and physical developments. Ah! could these unhappy beings open the book of Divine revelation, and read in it the words of our text; "thy desire shall be unto thy husband;" with what profound humiliation before God would they acknowledge, that their state is the execution of a sentence pronounced against sin.

Christian women! Though you are more privileged, be not less humbled on account of the sentence which sin has brought upon you; yea, learn to recognize in that sentence a sacred duty. Remember that the submission which you owe to him, to whom you have united your destiny, is at once a *condemnation* and a *command*, emanating from the authority of God himself. These words of the Lord, "Thy desire shall be unto thy husband," are often brought to your remembrance, in other terms, by the sacred writers of the gospel dispensation: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." God forbid, that forgetting the privileges which Christianity confers upon you, we should wish to place you under a servile fear,

or a cruel bondage! God forbid that we should commend the unworthy abuse, which too many husbands make of the authority entrusted to them! Ah! would to God the words, *authority* and *submission*, were never pronounced in christian families! Would to God that christian love, that most powerful, holiest, and sweetest of all motives, were the only one that reigned in the domestic union, governed all its relations, and softened all its trials! But while you enjoy the privilege, forget not the duty. If Christianity in this, as in every thing else, shows itself to be the law of liberty, let your conscience, rendered more tender by that liberty, prevent you from abusing it. Nothing can excuse the violation of a duty, not even the consent implied or avowed of him who is the object of it, nor any intellectual, social, or religious superiority. Christian women! the place which Christianity assigns you, is so beautiful, so sweet, so conformable to your character, and to the nature of your gifts, that, in seeking to abandon it, you not only violate a Divine command, but also renounce your own happiness. Happiness is never to be found out of the path of duty!

But, though woman be allowed to taste, in the bosom of a united family, all the sweet enjoyments of domestic life, yet the sentence which we are considering, so completely embraces, in its several clauses, her whole existence, that these sweet enjoyments are continually mixed with trouble and bitterness. Who can witness that long train of infirmities and sufferings which precedes the moment, when woman acquires the happy title of mother, without calling to mind, with feelings of holy fear, those words of the Lord, so accurately accomplished; "I will greatly multiply the sorrows of thy pregnancy." But especially, who can reflect, that not one of the poor and miserable children of Adam comes into life, without heart-rending cries of unparalleled pain, and long hours of mortal anguish, on the part of the unhappy mother, and not recognize, with inward groans, the curse of sin, and acknowledge the execution of the sentence, "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children?" Ah! ask the afflicted husband, who, after having shared, by the liveliest sympathy, in the agonies of a beloved companion, has seen her sink under the weight of her sufferings, and go down to the grave

the moment when another object of affection was just coming into the world, to put a seal to a union already so happy; ask him, I say, what voice was heard at the bottom of his agonizing soul! He will tell you, that amid the darkness which enveloped his afflicted heart, he heard the voice of malediction, which spake in Eden. And will not the young orphan, which is destined never to enjoy the happiness of a mother's love, add its sad testimony to that of a mourning father? Oh, yes; on every side we shall hear the terrible words, *condemnation* and *sin;* on every side the voice of lamentation shall proclaim the eternal justice of God, and His horror of moral evil; and, to arouse the attention of the most careless, and make them serious, repeat, " I will greatly multiply the sorrows of thy pregnancy; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children."

But if such, since the fall, be the history of all the daughters of Eve, the sentence of condemnation reaches further. If the child of so many sorrows announces its entrance into life by cries of pain, through what a series of sufferings, infirmities, and sicknesses has that feeble creature, that miserable worm

of the earth to pass! How much must it yet cost her whom it has already cost so dearly! And where shall those long protracted miseries find a termination? Alas! they shall have no boundary but the tomb. Ah! it is not Eve alone, whom the sentence of condemnation reaches; it strikes the first man, and in him all his fallen race.* The righteous Judge turns to sinful Adam, already covered with confusion from a consciousness of his guilt, and trembling with fear. In vain has he endeavoured to exculpate himself by throwing the blame of his sin upon his wife; his excuses are not admitted; God reduces them to nothing by these considerations, which precede his condemnation: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it . . . ." Here Adam has no more excuses; he is silent; "every mouth shall be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." Trembling, he hears his awful sentence. . . . . But what! is it upon the abode of man, upon this earth, still sparkling with freshness and

* We speak here only of condemnation to *temporal* evils.

beauty, that the first curse falls? "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." What grief to guilty Adam! What a source of evils to his descendants! They are doomed to tenant a world cursed for man's sake! My brethren, have you learned to recognize in the thorns and thistles which overspread the earth, in its burning deserts, in intemperate seasons and devastating scourges, a fruit of sin and an effect of the malediction of God?—Receive instruction, you who appear to accuse the calamities of which this earth is the theatre, and cease to raise injurious doubts against Divine Providence. You also, who, while you sincerely wish to check every rising suspicion of the wisdom and goodness of God, yet sometimes feel your confidence shaken, at seeing the innumerable evils which seem to affect, without distinction, the righteous and the wicked, cease to see the original design of the all-wise Creator in those disorders, which have the appearance of impugning the Divine government, in those convulsions of nature; in those tremendous earthquakes, which consign whole cities, with their populations, to a frightful tomb; in those over-

whelming inundations, which carry death into the abodes of man; in those hurricanes which ravage his possessions; in those hail-storms which frustrate the anxious expectations of the husbandman; in those famines and plagues which, like angels of destruction, seem as if they had received a commission to depopulate the earth.—Remember that Eternal Truth declared, on the finishing of the work of creation, that "*every thing was very good,*" and learn to see in those scourges, a fearful commentary upon the words which we are considering: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake!" It is not, then, the moral malady that preys upon humanity alone, that should cry to us, for our humiliation, *man is fallen!* but also these numberless evils and sufferings, which wring from afflicted nature its deep-drawn groans, this judgment of God in Eden, like a raging volcano, whose burning lava covers every point of this vale of tears, should humble us, and make us feel our sins, and, with a powerful eloquence, preach to us the justice of God and His hatred of moral evil.

God forbid, however, that we should be so ungrateful as to overlook the many proofs of

the Divine benignity, which the Creator has left for the good of His creature, upon this earth which He has cursed. God forbid that we should wish to damp your admiration of the sublime beauties which still are visible in the works of God. On the contrary, we feel that every thing in these works, is calculated to lead us back to our Creator, either through fear and awe of His divine majesty, when we contemplate the marks of His indignation and wrath, or through gratitude and love, when we admire the proofs of His goodness. God speaks to us in nature, as well as revelation, pronouncing, through its medium, sometimes a curse or a sentence of condemnation, sometimes a promise or a blessing. The hail-storm which devastates the fields, is as much a messenger of God as the dew that refreshes the ground. The loud voice of the rolling thunder, and the burning trace of the blazing lightning, speak to us of the Lord, as well as the majestic rising of the solar orb, or the melodious concert of the feathered tribes, which seem to celebrate its diurnal return, "There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard, their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words unto

the end of the world." Happy, if we always received the lesson which that voice was intended to teach us!

Now that the ground is cursed for man's sake, he must draw from it the support of his miserable existence with pain and difficulty. The delicious fruits of Eden shall no longer yield to him their riches; they shall be insufficient for his subsistence: "In sorrow shalt thou eat of the herb of the field all the days of thy life; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Here is another clause of the sentence which the Lord pronounces upon Adam. And is it necessary for us to point out the terrible execution of it in the life of man? Who is there among the sons of men, that has not eaten the bread of pain and affliction upon earth, all the days of his mortal life? The happy days of Eden are gone without return. Even those of Adam's children who enjoy the fairest lot, those who are not doomed to eat bread laboriously earned by the sweat of their brow, are they happy? Do we not see them, in the midst of riches and opulence, eating, with disquietude and bitterness, a bread which is often sprinkled with more tears than that of the poor? In

vain do they seek to violate the command enjoined in this condemnation, by withdrawing from labour, which is the duty of all; in vain do they think to escape the sentence by taking refuge in an idle and useless life, which serves only to aggravate their culpability and to augment their misery! What they subtract from the labour of their hands, is added to the travail of their minds. The same man of God who here records the misfortunes of man in Eden, includes the whole human race in that melancholy picture which he draws of human life: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow."

But if, in the abodes of the rich, and in the gay assemblies of fashion, man, by assuming a false appearance of happiness, sometimes seems to give the lie to the Word of God, and induces the superficial observer to imagine that he has succeeded in escaping the sentence pronounced in Eden, let not this deceive you. Look through the deceitful surface, and you will find that the curse has penetrated even to the very core of human

life. Observe the prosperous worldly man, when he is himself, and when he has laid aside the mask, and you will find him a living witness of the truth of the words before us. Pass then to the cabin of the poor man, where every thing bespeaks indigence, misery, and suffering; or go into the workshop of the artisan, whom want has enfeebled, and who, to gain for himself and his family a miserable and precarious subsistence, is obliged to rise before the dawn of morning, and to pursue his labours to a late hour of the night; or stop in the presence of the toil-worn labourer, bent down to an accursed earth, whose bosom he tears open with painful efforts, and bedews with the sweat of his brow, in order to extract from it its fruits, and then say if the justice of God be a chimera, and if his threats be only uttered to inspire man with terror; say if the baneful marks of sin and the curse meet not your eyes on every side. Ah! how serious a lesson would life afford us, did we but know how to read it by the light of God's word! How different would its evils appear to us, did we but trace them to their real origin! Rich or poor, noble or mean, how would we be humbled

before God, did we feel that all our sufferings upon earth were a just punishment of sin!

But what shall be the end of all these miseries? The tomb! For this is the last and most terrible part of the condemnation pronounced upon man: "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." "The day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," was the Divine sanction appended to the command. And shall not that, which God hath said, be accomplished? Yes, death, under its most fearful form, spiritual death, consisting in the separation of the soul from God, had seized on Adam the moment he sinned. And from that time, physical death, which is but a consequence of the former, deposited in his body, hitherto clothed with immortality, the germ of dissolution, which was soon to bring his life to a termination. Death, *temporal* and *eternal*, is a strictly necessary consequence of sin. "The wages of sin is death." "By one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin." O my brethren! has the thought ever yet occurred to you, that each

stroke which death deals around you, is but a repetition of the curse of sin? Death approaches, preceded by a train of diseases, infirmities, and pains; it strikes the infant, which drops from its mother's breast into the grave; and the youth, whom it snatches from amid his dreams of happiness; and the old man, who, for a long period of years, has eaten his bread in the sweat of his brow; it impresses upon that brow, bedewed with a clammy perspiration, the livid seal of condemnation, the mere view of which is sufficient to make us shudder. The terrestrial life, which began in tears, and flowed on in pain and sorrow, now ends in agonies; the last dying struggle repeats the sentence pronounced against sin; the grave opens its gaping jaws to receive man, who was taken out of the dust, and is doomed to return unto the dust again; the cold and heavy clay falls upon the coffin-lid, which cannot secure the child of corruption from mingling with his parent earth, and makes it ring with a hollow, mournful sound. This is the last repetition of the sentence pronounced in Eden! Thus, for six thousand years, have the millions of Adam's race descended, in succession, into the grave, repeat-

ing to us, as they went down, "The wages of sin is death." "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

Such was the sentence passed upon our first parents, a sentence which we see most rigorously executing before our eyes every day. My brethren, since we ourselves are all included in the same condemnation, and sin has filled our world with terror, sufferings, and death, where are we to look for succour and deliverance? Shall we never be permitted to know God under any other character than that of a consuming fire? Shall we never hear any thing but the thunders of His justice? Oh, no; a voice of mercy is heard; it speaks to us; it penetrates delightfully into the inmost recesses of our troubled hearts: God is love! Yes, God is love, even when He condemns; God is love, even when He curses.—A remedy for all our woes, a remedy, the idea of which would never have entered the mind of man, or even of angels, has, in the inexhaustible riches of the Divine compassion, been found out for us. The Repairer of the disorders of sin had already been promised to Adam, before he heard the sentence of death, which has just been mourn-

fully occupying our thoughts. And not only does the Almighty forbear to annihilate His guilty creature, not only does He prepare for him an unexpected deliverance, but He even veils His designs of mercy, and the means of salvation which He has provided under the terms of His condemnation. So that, even in this world, and while we are enduring the penalty of sin, we are enabled to discern in that penalty the marks of God's love. The woman is condemned to a thousand sufferings, but she is promised the happiness of becoming a mother. Man is doomed to eat the bread of toil and labour; a thousand miseries overspread a tear-bedewed earth.—But if it were not so; if sinful man had been able to give himself up, without restraint and without suffering, to all his disordered passions, to all his wickedness, to all his vices; if sin had not brought with it its own immediate chastisement, and met with a salutary check, what would a world, fallen from God, have become? Iniquity, like an impetuous torrent, would have desolated the earth, corrupted and polluted the inmost folds of man's heart, and converted the whole race of Adam into one infected, pestilential mass of corruption,

without remedy and without hope. Hell, with its eternal terrors, and its eternal torments, would have commenced in Eden, have invaded the whole human family, and become our only heritage. Ask the thousands of the redeemed, whom the Saviour has rescued from the dominion of sin, like brands plucked from the burning, ask them by what means they have been brought back to God, and to their original destination. They will tell you, almost without exception, that it was, like the prodigal son, by tribulation, by affliction, in fact, by the punishment of sin. And are not they who "stand before the throne of God, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands, those who have come out of great tribulation?"—Blessed be God! Blessed be God for the thunders of His justice! Blessed be God for the curse denounced against sin!

Man is condemned to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow. He is doomed to procure it with labour and fatigue. But what would he have become, had he not been subjected to that salutary labour, which distracts his thoughts from himself, occupies his mind, mortifies his passions, and puts a certain

restraint upon the corruption which dwells within him? A prey to his own reflections, master of his own life, and burdened with the weight of his days, he would have become the sport of his passions, and have plunged into every species of iniquity which a corrupt imagination could have invented. The punishment of sin, to a certain extent, deprives him of the power and opportunity of doing evil, in spite of himself, and sometimes becomes, in the hands of God, the means of bringing him to salvation. And what dissatisfaction, what weariness, what an insupportable feeling of emptiness must continually have attended an idle and useless existence! On the contrary, what a source of enjoyment and satisfaction, what a means of developing and perfecting his faculties does he now find in a life consecrated to useful labour! Blessed be God! Blessed be God for the thunders of His justice! Blessed be God for His curse denounced against sin!

Man is condemned to die; but how deplorable would have been his lot, had he been doomed to immortality! to drag on, upon an accursed earth, and in a world of suffering and corruption, a fatal immortality; to groan

under the infirmities of an eternal old age, and under the burden of an unprofitable life, without the hope of ever seeing the termination of his miseries! O death, messenger of the curse of my God, and, at the same time, of the deliverance which He has provided! I hail thee as one of His choicest benefits; strike thy victims; deliver them from this body of death, this envelope of sin and corruption, and if they be Christ's, if they have accepted the amnesty proclaimed on Calvary, thy approach will be their deliverance; thou shalt conduct them from an earth cursed on account of sin, and bringing forth thorns and thistles; an earth where sin embitters and defiles every thing, unto "the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—There "all things are made new;" the curse is taken away; it no longer presses upon the earth; "the wilderness and the solitary place are glad; the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose; it blossoms abundantly, and rejoices even with joy and singing."—"The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God." Death, the last

penalty of sin, the last enemy that is to be overcome, emancipates the disciple of Christ from all his miseries, loses its power over him, and is annihilated.—"There shall be no more death there, neither sorrow, nor weeping, nor pain; all tears shall be wiped away from all eyes."—"The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."—"This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality." Blessed be God! Blessed be God for the thunders of His wrath! Blessed be God for His curse denounced against sin!

Yes, let us bless God; for, be it remembered, His curse might have been eternal, and have seized our souls without the hope of deliverance. But instead of this, observe, that all the clauses of it refer exclusively to this present life. I mean not to say that the sin of Adam did not, as well as every sin which we commit, deserve an eternal condemnation; on the contrary, we believe that, had he not been reconciled to his God, that one sin, were it the only one of which he had been guilty during the whole of his life, would have excluded him for ever from the presence of his God. But with regard to us, his fallen

children, God would not have extended the punishment of his sin beyond the limits of our time of trial. We might have been condemned eternally for our own sins, but not for that of the first man. I am aware that, in this opinion, I am opposed to the systems of theologians, whose judgment, in other respects, I regard with the highest veneration. —But we are not expounding the systems of men; we keep strictly to the Word of God, as expressed in our text.—Ah! I cannot too often repeat it; let us bless God for the terms in which He has couched His sentence! The chastisement of the fall is temporal, the blessings of deliverance are eternal. We, fallen like Adam, are corrupt; we are born estranged from God; we live afar off from Him, until we are brought back by His grace to our primitive destination; we suffer the temporal consequences of the fall; but we have a remedy; the way to Eden is re-opened to us; we have a Saviour; our sins, those very sins, the wages of which is death eternal, have found an expiation; we may obtain pardon; the Lord even waiteth that He may be gracious.

Who, among you, O immortal beings! who,

among you, will refuse to hasten, that he may have part in the amnesty, the pardon, the deliverance? Ah! remember, that now the fatal consequences of sin reach to an illimitable eternity. Remember, that if you neglect the remedy which Christ offers you, there is no other remedy to which you can have recourse. Remember, that if the temporal curse lead you not to the Saviour, the curse pronounced against *your* sins, shall be an eternal one. My God! "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

MEDITATION VIII.

THE NAME OF EVE.—THE COATS OF SKINS.

GEN. III. 20, 21.

"And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

AMONG the passages of history, which have been handed down to us in the Sacred Writings, there are few, perhaps, more touching than that which records the sickness and miraculous cure of the pious Hezekiah, king of Judah. He had but lately been delivered, by the intervention of the Divine power, from the grasp of the proud and warlike Sennacherib, the full weight of whose vengeance, the haughty harangue of Rabshakeh had given him reason to anticipate. Happy and grateful at seeing that the God of Israel had heard his fervent supplications, he was once more established upon the throne of his

fathers, which, for a moment, had been shaken to its basis. But another trial awaited him: "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came unto him, and said unto him; Set thy house in order, for thou must die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and said, Remember now, I beseech Thee, O Lord, how I have walked before Thee with a perfect heart, and have done that which was good in Thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore." He weeps, being in doubt if his prayer shall be heard; his heart melts with grief and anguish; for the preservation of all the people of God, whom he has rescued from idolatry, and who are now threatened with an exterminating war, seems to depend upon his life, and he sees himself cut off in the midst of his days. I feel it quite impossible to render the spirit of that touching and pious elegy in which he breathes forth the grief of his heart. "I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabi-

tants of the world: mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off as a weaver my life; He will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt Thou make an end of me. I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will He break all my bones; from the day even to night wilt Thou make an end of me. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it. I shall go softly all my days in the bitterness of my soul."

Meanwhile, he who had been the messenger of death from the Lord to Hezekiah, once more presents himself before him, and, as a messenger of glad tidings, conveys to him a promise of deliverance. The voice of Isaiah again addresses him: "Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee, and add unto thy days fifteen years, and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria."

Upon hearing these words the pious king

Judah again takes up his lyre; but how different are its strains now: "O Lord, by these things men live, and in these things is the life of my spirit; so wilt Thou recover me, and make me to live. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back. For the grave cannot praise Thee; death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down to the pit cannot hope for Thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known Thy truth. The Lord was ready to save me: therefore will I sing my songs to the stringed instruments, all the days of my life in the house of the Lord."

You may imagine, my brethren, that these sweet thoughts, these thanksgivings for a signal deliverance, in which the Lord had displayed the riches of his goodness, have little in connection with the subject of our meditations, as we are this day called to contemplate the first man, bowed down under the weight of that condemnation, which formed the basis of our last discourse. Yet it is just this situation of fallen man, that reminds us of

Hezekiah; not that Adam had humbled himself like him, had prayed like him, and like him had seen the deliverance of the Lord; but that, even under the weight of the condemnation, which had justly fallen upon him, he was a monument of the mercy and long-suffering of his God. Like Hezekiah, he saw the prolongation of a life, which he had reason to expect to see dried up in its sources, under the malediction of the Most High; like Hezekiah, he had occasion to chant a hymn of thanksgiving and praise. He continued, it is true, condemned with all his race. "The earth was cursed for his sake;" he was doomed to "eat the fruit of it in sorrow, and in the sweat of his brow all the days of his life." He was to share, with his companion, a life which sin had poisoned. But was this all he had reason to anticipate, when, after his fall, he fled, ashamed and trembling, from the presence of the Lord? No, doubtless; the sanction of the command which he had violated was, "The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." That day, that terrible day, had now arrived. Adam, indeed, suffered the execution of the sentence in the separation of his soul from God, which is,

spiritual death. He bore, it is true, in his body the germ of dissolution, that was, at a future period, to bring forth in him sickness and death. But had he nothing more to fear from the just wrath of the Almighty? As he had sinned, as he had fallen, failed to fulfil the end of his being, and, as far as in him lay, frustrated the design of God in creating him, had he not reason to expect that death, the terrible wages of sin, would immediately be inflicted upon him; that an offended God would again consign him to that nothing out of which he had drawn him, or rather that, banishing him for ever from his presence, he would deliver him over to eternal torments, with those who are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day?" But, instead of this, what does he experience? First, he sees a God slow to anger, who questions him in a manner calculated to awaken in his conscience a lively and painful feeling of his sin, and to excite in his heart a repentance unto life,—a God who condescends to give him reasons for the sentence which He pronounces upon him. And what does that sentence tell him? Does it

consign him at once to death, to destruction, to annihilation? No! "cursed is the ground for thy sake." . . . This earth, then, shall not open its jaws to swallow him up! "Thou shalt eat of the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread." . . . . Time then is allowed, a respite is afforded to the sinner! The woman is condemned "in sorrow to bring forth children." . . . . Adam, then, shall have offspring! The creature of God, who has deserved for himself perdition and ruin, is called to communicate to others, to thousands of future generations, the existence which God has given him, and which, in His rich mercy, He recalls not again! Adam, who at first was speechless in the presence of his Judge—Adam, who had brought down upon his guilty head the weight of the Divine wrath, and whose soul, trembling with fear, and already tormented by remorse, the malediction of the Most High had reached—Adam, in hearing the sentence which his God pronounces upon him, sees mercy beaming even through the terms of the condemnation. Through the gloomy cloud of the Divine curse, he discerns a feeble light; he fixes his gaze upon it; a ray of

hope penetrates his heart; he directs towards his companion, her whom he had accused of all the fault of his sin, and whom he no longer dared to look upon, but with the conscious shame of guilt, he directs towards her a glance, in which are visibly depicted consolation and new hope: "Thou," he says to her, "art Eve," yea, thou shalt be "the mother of all living."

Ah! my brethren, had there been in Eden an Isaiah, to transmit to us the thanksgivings of our first father, as that prophet has done those of the King of Judah, would we not have been privileged to hear the hymn of Adam, as well as that of Hezekiah? Would not the strains of Eden rival those of Zion? Yes, instead of those few words which follow the sentence of condemnation, "Adam called his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living," we should have heard the sinner, spared by the hand of destruction, pouring forth his heart, broken with the feeling of his deep fall, in fervent thanksgivings; "Thou art Eve; thou shalt give life; thou shalt be a mother; thou shalt communicate the existence which our God continues to us, to millions of beings, whom He will yet love,

whom He will yet save. Innumerable generations shall know the happiness of existence, shall live upon this earth, taste the sweets of life, and transmit from one to another the privileges which we leave them; the design of our merciful Creator shall be accomplished; the world is not destroyed; our fall is great, but it is not, perhaps, irreparable; have we not already a promise of a future salvation? O the depth of the merciful counsels of our God! O the wonders of his infinite goodness!" . . . . . .

But we imagine that we hear some one mournfully demanding, How could Adam have thought and felt thus? What grounds had he for thanksgiving? What joy could he have derived from the thought that Eve was to become a mother? What! was it a source of happiness to him, whose soul was polluted with guilt, whose heart was bowed down under the curse of heaven, and blighted by the breath of sin; who bore in him the seeds of corruption and death, that were one day to bring him down to the dust of the ground; was it a source of happiness to such a being, to think that he should communicate to future generations a miserable existence,

a polluted life, replete with all the evils and sufferings to which sin gives birth; a life without object, without support, separated from its original source; a life full of ruin and miseries without number; a life which the unhallowed passions that rage, like a volcano, in the human breast, would convert into the theatre of injustice, violence, hatred, war, tyranny, pride, and impurity; a life which should begin with tears, and end in sickness, agonies, and death? Far from seeing in the melancholy privilege of bequeathing such an existence to others a subject of hope and joy, must not Adam rather have regarded it as the consummation of his misfortunes? Must he not have shed bitter tears over the lot of his unhappy posterity, and cried, in giving his wife her new name, "O wherefore art thou Eve? Wherefore hath God allowed thee the fatal privilege of becoming the mother of all living?"

Alas, my brother, you would have too much reason to use this language, if Adam had only seen in the future, the successive generations of mankind coming into the world with a corrupt and sinful nature, living in rebellion against their Creator, returning to the ground

out of which they were taken, and, finally, giving an account to an offended God of all the sins which they had committed during their whole life.—But here mistake not; have we not seen a curse pronounced upon the first author of evil, the seducer of man? Has not this sentence been uttered before that of Adam?—"The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," and come forth triumphant from that conflict which is going to take place between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light! The promise of a Redeemer, as given to Adam, was probably much more explicit than it appears in the obscure terms of the passage which we have just quoted. But, however that may be, enough had been expressed by the Lord to raise the hopes of the poor sinner, who must otherwise have sunk under the strokes of His justice. We have in the first part of the Book of Genesis, if not proofs, at least sufficiently strong indications, that, previous to the clear and positive promises made to Abraham, the patriarchs, and the prophets, holy men of old, from the earliest period, professed a hope, in the nature of which they could not be mistaken, though perhaps they

might err as to the exact time when it was to be realized. Hence we find Eve, in giving birth to her first-born son, in whom she imagined she saw the accomplishment of her hopes, crying, "I have gotten a man the Lord"*—the God-man. Hence we find the first children of Adam offering up sacrifices, the import of which cannot be questioned by any one who understands the spirit of the Old Testament and its connexion with the New. Hence, also, we see Lamech, animated by the hope of his fathers, giving to his son the name of Noah, a name which signifies rest, and exclaiming, in evident allusion to the sentence pronounced in Eden, "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed."

Such, my brethren, is the hope which Adam transmitted to his descendants; such is the hope which cheered his drooping heart, and enabled him, amid the bitterness that filled his soul, to find some happiness in giving the name of Eve to his companion, and calling her "the mother of all living." In this sense,

* Such is the literal translation of the words.

she was not only to be the mother of all those who should spend their days in misery upon an accursed earth, but more especially of those who, through the accomplishment of the promise, should live through a Redeemer, live in God, live for eternity! O my brethren in Christ Jesus! shall not we who live and bear in our hearts the hope which maketh not ashamed, the pledge of eternal life, shall we not unite with Adam in blessing that long-suffering God, who for nearly six thousand years has suffered a sin-polluted earth to exist, that he might gather out of it the harvest of his redeemed? Yes, let all those children of Adam who live for heaven, and all those who have already attained everlasting felicity, join with the sinner in Eden to celebrate the mercies of God, and, to praise Him who, instead of blotting out of existence her by whom sin was introduced into the world, allowed her to be called "*Eve, life, the mother of all living.*"

The text contains another proof of the goodness of God toward his sinful creatures, whom he mercifully purposed to save, even while he condemned them. As soon as man had violated the divine command, he felt

shame on account of his nakedness before God. He had lost his purity and innocence; and inward pollution manifests itself by unhallowed desires, which are followed by shame and remorse. In vain has he recourse to a miserable expedient to hide his nakedness; the fig-leaves cannot conceal his guilt from Him "who searcheth the heart, and whose eyes are as a flaming fire." He stands without excuse in the presence of his Judge; his mouth is stopped when he hears the sentence which condemns him. But O the unsearchable goodness of God, which is displayed even in the midst of judgment! He who comes forth to condemn the sinner, Himself condescends to cover the shame of his nakedness: "Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." If, without adopting a system of allegorical interpretation which we by no means approve of, we have been forced to regard the shame which the first man felt after his fall as the immediate effect of sin, and as a proof that his soul had been spoiled of its innocence and glory; must we not also recognize in the coats of skins, with which the Lord covered the nakedness of His creature, something

more than is implied in the mere words of the sacred historian, who relates all these transactions of Eden as they appeared to that early age in which they took place, without hinting at their hidden meaning? Doubtless the first thing which we should see in the words under consideration, is the tender solicitude and condescension of a Father, who clothes his fallen creatures as he does the lilies of the field. He does not abandon them, he cares for them, he supplies them with food, and shows them from whence they are to procure raiment. But let us not stop in the letter, which killeth. Let us remember that it was sin that rendered necessary the garments with which the Lord covered the nakedness of the sinner; and let us learn to see in them a first remedy for sin, a first mark of the spiritual mercy of the Lord.

I shall now give the reasons which seem to warrant our adopting such a conclusion. We naturally demand, Whence came these coats of skins with which the Lord clothed Adam and his companion? The fruits of the ground had been assigned to man as his food from the creation; it had been said to him after the fall, "thou shalt eat of the herb of the field,"

nor was it until after the flood that he was allowed to eat animal food, which appears not to have been originally intended for his use. It is evident, then, that these coats of skins could not have been taken from animals slain for the nourishment of man. On the other hand, it seems exceedingly improbable that they were put to death solely with a view to supplying him with clothing. These considerations have induced the greater part of interpreters to conclude, that a solemn sacrifice had taken place in Eden, that the blood of victims had been shed to ratify the promise of a Redeemer, and that from the animals employed on this occasion, were borrowed the coats of skins. I admit that there is no positive proof of the truth of this opinion. But is it not rendered extremely probable, by the fact, that we no where read of the original institution of sacrifices, and yet that the first children of Adam offered them to the Lord, the one of the first fruits of the ground, the other of the firstlings of his flock? How did they come to worship God in this manner, like sinners troubled in their consciences by a sense of guilt? Must it not have been that they learned from their father the meaning of

sacrifice? And further, do we not constantly see, in the Old Testament, the solemn promises of God ratified by the blood of victims, which prefigured, until the fulness of times, the great sacrifice of atonement? Are we not told in the word of God, whose depths we never can fully fathom, that "the Lamb of God was slain before the foundation of the world?" Yes, my brethren, I like to see the gracious designs of redemption pourtrayed in types to the view of the first sinner in Eden. I like to see the unbroken chain of God's promises uniting, through a series of ages, Eden and Calvary, the first and the second Adam, the fall and the deliverance. I like to think that the name of Jesus, "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," that name so dear to the sinner's heart, that name which enfolds in it all the love, the mercy, the tender compassion of heaven. I like to think that that name of Jesus, anticipated by hope, or received by faith, prefigured by sacrifices, or commemorated in the Lord's Supper, has been in all ages the hope of poor sinners, the expectation of Adam's fallen race.

Thus the victim which was immolated in Eden, as the seal of God's promise, the victim

whose fumes ascended up unto heaven, as an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour, clothed our first parents with its spoils, covered the shame of their nakedness, and admirably typified the robe of the Redeemer's righteousness which Isaiah celebrates, and without which, the sinner shall find himself eternally naked and confounded before his Judge—that robe, without which, one of the guests having entered the marriage feast, was ignominiously cast out into outer darkness. Thus, like Isaiah on the mountains of Israel, at a subsequent period, the first sinner in Eden, though he may have seen less clearly than the evangelical prophet, the salvation of God, was enabled, rising above his shame and misery, and withdrawing from beneath the weight of the divine malediction, to look into a distant future, and sing this song of deliverance, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

MEDITATION IX.

THE BANISHMENT.

GEN. III. 22—24.

"And the Lord God said: Behold man is become as one of us to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life."

WE have now arrived at the last of our meditations, and it only remains for us to witness the winding up of that drama of happiness and innocence, temptation and fall, judgment and punishment, whose successive scenes have been exhibited before our eyes. We are now about to behold Adam deprived of access to the tree of life, excluded from his abode, banished from

places where he had drawn life from its real source, and casting perhaps a last and sorrowful look towards the garden of the Lord, which he has lost for ever. Let us also yield to the strong desire which he feels. Let us once more turn towards Eden to recall to our recollections its mysterious and instructive scenes. But alas! if our looks love to linger on the creature of God, innocent, pure, and happy, we soon see the seducer approach him with all the deadly influence of hell, we hear his insidious questions, his denial of the truth of God. Doubt enters into the heart of the woman; she wavers in uncertainty between two contrary influences, and on the verge of an abyss . . . . She falls into it, and in her fall draws down with her Adam and her unhappy posterity. The Lord does not punish His creature immediately upon his revolt; he leaves him time for repentance, and with a view to this, he interrogates him in a manner calculated to awaken in his heart a consciousness of his crime. But Adam, who has lost his primitive innocence, now feels towards his God, instead of the love of a child, nothing but the fear of a slave; he trembles; he is confounded; and yet he is still a stranger to humiliation! At length, the sentence of con-

demnation falls from the mouth of the righteous Judge; the earth is cursed; its beauty is withered; Eden is doomed to be converted into a wilderness; happiness is changed into misery under the strokes of the Divine malediction; man, cut off from the source of life, passes through a long succession of labours, miseries, and sufferings, to the grave and to corruption; his soul cannot die, but it is under the curse; it has lost the favour and the love of God, and communion with Him. Man, who beheld, in the beauty of creation and in the objects which surrounded him, the most striking proofs of the tender mercy of a Father, now sees in them only marks of His indignation and righteous wrath.

But no; amid those gloomy clouds, a feeble light appears; the curse of the Most High contains a future blessing for man; a mysterious promise accompanies the sentence pronounced upon the serpent; in process of time his power shall be destroyed; the influence which he has usurped over mankind shall be taken away from him, by the seed of the woman. Thus a merciful God, by holding out to man a distant but consolatory hope, prevents him from sinking into despair on account of his deplorable situ-

ation. O the love of God! The posterity of Adam, while sharing with him his condemnation and his misery, shall find a remedy along with the evil; blessing and life shall yet be the heritage of those, who had nothing to expect but curse and death.

But as God cannot cease to be just, and as He can never allow His law to be trampled under foot with impunity, the sentence pronounced must be executed in all its rigour. Eternal God! It is then Thy holiness and Thy justice that we have to contemplate this day; it is Thy horror of sin, it is the proof that Thou dost not hold the sinner guiltless! Oh, fill us with awe and reverence in Thy presence! Teach us "what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God," that we may be constrained to flee from the wrath to come, and to seek refuge in thy mercy, as displayed in Jesus, who is our only hope!

The subject of this day's meditation is difficult in many respects, though extremely instructive. And first, with regard to the meaning of the words: "Behold, man is become as one of us to know good and evil;" three different interpretations lay claim to our acceptance.

The greater part of interpreters regard these words as ironical, and suppose that God, in saying that Adam had become like one of the divine persons of the Holy Trinity, designed to humble him, by reminding him that such had been his foolish ambition in listening to the lying promise of the tempter: "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." As an ironical turn of phrase expresses exactly the contrary of what its terms naturally imply, the Lord, according to this interpretation, would give fallen man to understand the folly and guilt of his proud pretensions. What divinity is thine! What prerogatives thou hast acquired by disobeying thy God and obeying the devil! Thou pretendest to divinity; thou desiredst to know good and evil by a fatal experience, and behold, O unhappy creature! behold, now thou art stripped of thy innocence and thy glory, behold, thou art polluted, separated from thy God, condemned, and plunged into the depths of misery, darkness, and ignorance! Behold, how man is become like one of us! He knows indeed good and evil! Though God, whose character and perfections are sometimes represented to us after the manner of men, might, as the Scripture saith, "mock"

those who had the pride and folly to rebel against Him; though we are told that Eternal Wisdom will "laugh at the calamity" of such; and though men of God have frequently made use of the bitterest irony, as Elisha towards the prophets of Baal, and Isaiah towards the idolatrous Israelites;—though for these reasons there is nothing unworthy in supposing God to employ this form of human language, so proper to humble the proud, yet, in the present instance, we cannot adopt the interpretation proposed. There is here too great a depth of misery to be revealed to Adam and to his posterity, to suppose that God would have chosen to instruct them in it, in the language of irony. No, no! He who made all things, He who in the days of His flesh shed tears over the fall of the guilty Jerusalem, would rather have wept over His creature in Eden, had he already been clothed with the nature of man and known the tears of compassion!

Another very ingenious interpretation has been suggested, according to which these words, "Man is become as one of us," have reference to the gospel promise given by God in the 15th verse of our chapter, and to the views of redemption, which the Divine Being,

entertained in favour of mankind. Man, chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world, redeemed by a Saviour promised in Eden, becomes *one* with Him, is made partaker of a Divine nature, and acquires a perfect knowledge of good and evil. In this sense, it would be quite correct to say, that man had become as one of the persons of the Divine essence, as God; and thus the lying promise of the devil, contrary to his expectation, would be literally fulfilled. O the depth of the wisdom and love of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! But notwithstanding all the plausibility and attractiveness of this interpretation, (which we submit to your consideration,) we rather prefer to try a third, which appears to us more simple.

It consists in translating the passage thus: "Behold man *who was* as one of us, that is to say, who had been created in our image, after our likeness, to know good and evil." This version of the passage, which, far from being forced or contrary to the Hebrew, is decidedly more conformable to it, gives an exclamation of tender compassion and regret on the part of God at the sight of His fallen creature. Behold then, this man, created as one of us, formed in

our likeness, this man lately so happy, so innocent, so pure, to whom I had given an existence worthy the envy of angels; behold what sin has made him! Behold him rebellious, fallen, polluted! Behold him covered with shame, miserable, flying at the approach of his God whom he loved above all things! Behold him loaded with the weight of a just malediction! Behold him miserable, and doomed to bequeath to all his descendants a wretched existence like his own! O frightful consequences of sin! O foolish and guilty creature!

My brethren, remember that you also, sinners like Adam, condemned like Adam, are like him objects of this tender compassion of your God, who "willeth not the death of a sinner," and with whom "chastisement is a strange work," your God, who even when He condemns, remembers to have mercy; of your Saviour, who wept over the guiltiest of cities even while he denounced against it the terrible chastisements, with which God was about to punish its crimes. Ah! we conjure you then, let not God compassionate you in vain! Delay not to turn to Him, that His compassion may no longer be ineffectual; delay not until, delivered over to judgment, condemned in the

hardness of your heart and in your sins, ready to be consigned to outer darkness, where there is no hope; you hear the Sovereign Judge saying unto you, not as He will to the redeemed of Christ: "Enter into the joy of thy Lord," but as He did to Adam: Behold this man, who might have been as one of us, this being for whom I provided a Saviour and with Him all things, this being whom I have entreated to be reconciled to Me, to receive My spirit, to become a partaker of my divine nature, an inheritor of my eternal kingdom, behold him as sin has made him; behold him with all the pollutions of his life; behold him without a Saviour; behold him lost beyond the hope of recovery! Ah! remember, that if a holy and just God shows mercy, even when He condemns, He condemns even in showing mercy.

"Now then," adds our text, "lest he put forth his hand and take of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever . . . . . The Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden."

Before explaining the last part of our text, let us say a few words in explanation of the tree of life. And not to enumerate here the various opinions of men on this subject, we would merely state, that it appears evident to

us that we are to consider the tree of life, though a real one, as nothing more than a mere symbol. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was, as we have already seen, the external object to which God had attached His command, the object by means of which man was to know good by obedience, evil by violating the command connected with it, and by a sad contrast with good. The tree of life was a symbol of the same kind. It did not possess in its leaves any property to preserve health or to communicate life, as some have falsely supposed, any more than the tree of knowledge possessed the quality of being detrimental to the body or soul of man. "Life was in God: in Him was life," Saint John tells us, speaking of the eternal glory of the "Word, which was in the beginning with God." It was then from God alone that man was to draw life, a life which nothing could hurt while he continued joined to the source of existence, a life which was to be eternal. But God in His goodness, was pleased to give man a visible symbol,—a pledge of that eternal life which he was permitted to draw from his Creator. It was the will of God, that every time Adam ate of the fruit of that tree, he should have a material witness, testi-

fying to his senses, that it was to His free grace that he owed, not only his existence, but also the continual preservation of his being. In the same manner our gracious Saviour, who is the source of spiritual life to believers, was pleased to leave them a pledge, a visible symbol of that life, in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, which we are called to eat and drink, that we may thus receive Christ into our hearts, as Adam was to receive into his soul the life of God, in eating of the tree of life.

But now that man is under sentence of death, which is about to be executed; of spiritual death, by the separation of the soul from God, who is the source of life; and also of physical death, because where there is sin, there is likewise a principle of destruction; God proceeds to take away the symbol of life, the pledge of man's immortality. The words of the text, "Lest he stretch forth his hand and eat and live for ever," do not mean that by eating of the tree of life, man could have lived contrary to the sentence which God had pronounced upon him; but the removal even of the external symbol was a necessary part or consequence of the chastisement inflicted upon man. Of what use is the symbol when the reality no longer

exists? Of what use is the sign when the thing signified is destroyed? Let not Adam then any longer cherish the vain hope, that by having access to the tree of life, he shall still possess life! From that tree he must withdraw for ever, he must abandon Eden and proceed onwards toward the tomb.

My brethren! My fellow sinners! fallen posterity of Adam! Shall I say it? If you have not yet returned to the source of life, if you are still spiritually "dead in trespasses and sins," if, notwithstanding the means which God in His mercy has provided for restoring you to the life of heaven, by uniting you by faith to Christ, who is life, you are still followers of the world and not of Christ . . . . Yes, I must say it, I would that the tree of life were taken away from you also. I wish that so long as you continue estranged from God, you had not any of these external symbols of religion and of union with God, upon which you foolishly rest for life! Better would it be for you that the Lord's table were never spread before you; you could not then stretch out a presumptuous hand to receive it; while your heart feels nothing but indifference towards a Saviour whom you profess to adore and love! Yea,

better would it be for you never to have possessed that Bible, which you either do not read at all, or read only as a pharisaical task, or read to find out something to justify you in your sins and in your self-righteousness! Better would it be for you that these pulpits in which the gospel is preached had remained silent, that these temples were demolished, that all the externals of a lifeless worship, and of a religion without spirit and without power, were abolished! You could not then come here to misunderstand, to impose upon yourselves by fatal delusions, to aggravate your condemnation before God . . . . Ah! if you will not turn with your whole heart to the Lord, if you will not sincerely join yourselves unto Christ, who is life eternal, fly, fly like Adam far from the tree of life! in vain would you taste of its fruit; in vain would you slumber beneath its shade; you will find there nothing but death. Forsake these temples, lay aside the denomination of Christians, which you have usurped, cease to have "a name to live whilst ye are dead!" Or rather, oh! rather come to Him who is life, who can give you life, and who gives it abundantly. Live, live for God! live in Jesus!

"Therefore the Lord sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man, and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." It is not, then, enough that the way to the tree of life be barred against guilty man, nor that a cherubim, a mysterious and probably symbolical being, often described by Ezekiel, brandish before the sinner's eyes the flaming sword of Divine justice, to remind him continually of his crime, of his fall, and of the impossibility of ever regaining the source of life of himself; it is also necessary that he bid an eternal adieu to the delightful fields of Eden, those hallowed spots where the Lord conversed with him as a man converseth with his friend: "The Lord sent him forth from the garden; He drove out the man." Such is the last act of the Mosaic account upon which we have been meditating. Behold man exiled from Eden! Behold the most heart-rending banishment that was ever denounced against any of the human race! We understand your grief and your tears, O unhappy beings, whom an inexorable arrest

of the law snatches from all the endearments of a beloved land, where the hours of childhood have been spent, from all the joys of a family and friends tenderly beloved, from all the indescribable charms of the place where you learned to feel and to love, and removes you to some inhospitable clime, where the severest privations are the least of your evils, and where you languish, rather than love.—But what are your afflictions, compared with those of our first father, when he went out of Eden at the voice of his Judge, to wander with his unhappy companion in the desert countries of an accursed earth! O delights of Eden, life of innocence and love, blissful retreats where the Lord revealed Himself to the soul, where every thing was ravishing beauty without, and harmony and peace within, favours of God, happiness of His love and of His presence; you are lost for ever! Bitter regret! profound misery! Oh, could Adam find again the way to Eden! Oh that the flaming sword of eternal justice no longer glittered!

But no, it is not so, my brethren; Adam can no longer even desire the abode in Eden; and this is the completion of his misery! To fallen man, Eden has no more

attractions, no more glory, no more happiness. What avail the beauties of man's first abode? his heart, deprived of innocence and peace, could no longer enjoy them. What does it avail that the glorious majesty of the Lord still shines forth in all His works? man is despoiled and ashamed. What does it avail, that he still beholds over his head the azure firmament of heaven, and the brightness with which it sparkles, while darkness reigns in his soul, and gloomy clouds hide from him the glory of the Most High? What does it avail, that all created beings unite to send up on high one melodious hymn of praise? there is nothing now in the heart of man but discord, anguish, and grief. What does it avail what riches and abundance replenish Eden? man is poor, miserable, and naked. What avails the tree of knowledge? man sees in it an accusing witness of his crime. What avails the tree of life? man reads in it the sentence of death against himself. What avails even the presence of God? man now only sees in him a Judge; he feels in His presence only the fear of a slave, the shame of a criminal, the terror of a condemned malefactor. He has fled at the voice

of God; he has gone to hide his disgrace among the trees of Eden. Flee, Adam, flee far from thy God, far from Eden, which sin has made an abode of misery to thee; flee, and let the gates of Eden be closed upon thy footsteps, let the flaming sword for ever guard its entrance against thee!

O my beloved brethren! how hateful is sin in the sight of God! how bitter are its fruits! how disastrous its effects! Ah! you know little of sin, you who cherish the hope that you will be admitted into the presence of God in eternity, without being made meet for it by the grace of Christ and the sanctification of His Spirit! Sin would make this new Eden an abode of misery to you, as it did to the first man. Yes, even if it were possible for you to be admitted into heaven laden with your sins, without pardon, without conversion, heaven itself would be a hell to you!

But nothing that is defiled can dwell in His presence, who "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," and this is the reason why man is banished from Eden, and shut out from the presence of God. He has separated himself from the source of life, broken the bonds which united him to his Creator,

aspired at being a law unto himself, by trampling under foot the supreme law of his God: now then, let him go and try his new mode of existence beyond the precincts of Eden, cultivating with toil an accursed earth; let him go and live without God, without communion with Him, without His grace! Live without God! without Him who fills the heavens and the earth, and in whom alone, whether as it regards the soul or the body, we can "live, move, and have our being"—such an existence is a mere contradiction, such a life is death itself? Hence, my brethren, let the expulsion of Adam explain to us the existing state of man. Let it teach us why the natural man "lives without God in the world," without spiritual life, without the love of God; why, far from "seeking after God," he desires not the knowledge of Him, and does not receive the Divine law as the rule of his existence; why, on the contrary, he learns to take pleasure in offending Him, from whom he has received every thing, and in living in sin, in pollution, and in forgetfulness of God, as his natural element; why, (whilst God in His infinite mercy condescends to seek him, to call him to Himself, to prevent him, by an incompre-

hensible love,) he too often refuses to hear His voice, despises His Word and the invitations of His grace, hardens his heart, and persists in his rebellion. Let the expulsion of Adam explain to us the incomprehensible mystery of a world sunk in evil, a world whose sufferings seem to fling an accusation against Providence; a world full of sin, crimes, injustice, animosities, war, and murders. Let this fact explain to us the contradictions, the continual afflictions of a life whose sources sin has poisoned, and whose relations with God it has destroyed! Let this fact explain the grief which has invaded the whole human race, and the numberless sufferings which result from man's want of harmony with himself and with his God! Let this fact explain to us disease and death—death, that mystery inscrutable to human wisdom, that abyss which has yawned beneath the feet of man, ever since he was banished from Eden!

Ah! my brethren, deny it not, we also have been banished from Eden, or rather, we are born in this land of exile; Adam's lot has become ours; he has bequeathed unto us this sad heritage of sin, corruption, misery, and death! Let theologians write thousands of

volumes to prove what they call original sin, and let others again write as many more to disprove it; as for us, we shall reduce to two words, or, if you please, to two facts, the whole of this sad doctrine; I mean, the bitter feeling of a miserable heart, naturally estranged from God, full of aversion for or indifference to that which it ought to love above all things, and the existing state of the world. Enter into your own hearts, cast a glance at human society, and you will discover more upon this subject than you can ever learn from all the books and all the systems of men. After that, if you can still deny your fall and your banishment, you might as well deny your very existence and the light which shines around you. Deny them! alas, poor mortal! The sigh which escapes from your troubled heart, of itself proves to it that you are not in your native country. The painful feeling of imperfection and moral misery, which follows you even in the best and fairest moments of your life, also cries to you, poor exile! poor sinner! Do you ask of us a proof more sadly persuasive? Death has stricken some object of your affections in your arms; a livid veil has covered

the decomposed features which you so much loved to contemplate; corruption (frightful word!) has seized upon that being, lately sparkling with youth, and strength, and beauty; all that remains of it is going to be mingled with the vile dust which you tread beneath your feet; your anguished and sorrowing spirit involuntarily escapes from its prison, its desires launch out into infinity after the object which it has lost. . . . Poor exile! poor fallen creature! Do you require other proofs? Struck, in a moment of reflection, with the responsibility which rests upon you, you set yourself to examine your life; you see in it an uninterrupted succession of sins, defilements, and acts of unfaithfulness; your conscience is awakened, it cries, it summons you before the tribunal of God; you repent; you wish to do good, but you cannot; evil cleaves to you, pollutes your best actions, frustrates your best purposes; a heavy chain binds you to the earth, and shamefully renders you the slave of sin; a mournful groan escapes from your agonizing heart: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Poor sinner! do you require other proofs?

No, no! some "weary and heavy-laden" soul will cry, we doubt neither our exile nor our misery, the feeling of them overwhelms us; tell us rather, are we banished from Eden for ever? shall the flaming sword for ever guard its entrance against us? is there no remedy, no deliverance?

O my brother, how happy I am to answer you according to the urgent desires of your soul! How happy I am to tell you that Eden has been again opened to you, that the Son of God himself has come to turn aside the sword of Divine Justice, to bring you a reprieve, to recall you to your native country, to offer you a remedy for your woes. Poor exiles! Poor sinners! Come to Jesus! His cross is the tree of life; His blood cleanseth from all sin, His death reconciles to God, His mediation ties again all the bonds, which united man to the source of his being, and which sin had broken. Come to Jesus! He has procured for us, and will give us freely, instead of a perishable Eden from which we are exiled, "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," He has opened unto us "the city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God." *There* all the

evils which sin has brought into the world are cured; *there*, there is more joy and happiness, than ever there was misery upon earth, from the exile of Adam, to the last cry of grief that shall be uttered in this vale of tears. But beware that you cherish not the delusive hope of entering into this abode of happiness and holiness, as you are, fallen and polluted by sin; remember that there is but one way which leads to it, but one name given unto men whereby they can be saved,—the name of Jesus; remember that there is but one means of enjoying the pleasures of heaven,—a true and sincere conversion through the influence of the sanctifying Spirit.

And you, Christians, my beloved brethren, you who have already come to Jesus, and found in Him pardon and peace, but who still have often to groan over your sins and the sorrows which you encounter in your pilgrimage, lift up your desponding hearts, take courage; look no longer towards that Eden from whence you were banished with your first parent; look forward towards your heavenly country, the New Eden, which Christ gives you for your inheritance; there you will see, with St. John, "a new heaven, and a new

earth, the Holy city, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of it, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruits every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face: and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there

shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever! Come Lord Jesus, come quickly! Amen!"

EXEGETICAL DEVELOPMENTS.

OF THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN.

" Then God said, let us make man in our own image, after our likeness."

1. As we have devoted one of our Meditations to the consideration of this verse, with a view to examine the scriptural accounts of the primitive state of man, previous to laying before you the history of the fall, it may not be unprofitable for us here to add some proofs and illustrations on the subject. It would have been unnecessary to dwell upon the first part of the verse, and we might have commenced at once with the explanation of the two words, *image* and *likeness*, which alone enter into our subject, were it not that a false interpretation of the deliberative language of the passage has led some interpreters to absurd views with regard to the image of God in which man was created. Some Jewish writers have supposed, that God, in thus speaking in the plural number, " Let us make man,"

&c. meant to address the earth from whence He was going to draw the materials which were to serve for the creation of man; who, in consequence, was to bear in his weakness the image of the earth from whence he was taken, and in his strength and beauty the image of his Creator. Other Rabbins suppose, as we see from their Targums,* (Chaldaic paraphrases upon certain parts of the Old Testament,) that God here addresses the angels, whose image He designed to impart to His new creature. It is scarcely possible to conceive how men, with the Bible before them, could adopt these opinions, since, in the following verse, it is twice repeated, that "God *created* man in His *own image*." To avoid these absurdities, two different interpretations have been adopted, accounting for this use of the *plural* number. 1st. A great many interpreters see, in this form of expression, nothing more than what they call the *plural* of *majesty*, in imitation of the manner of kings. But this custom of speaking in the plural number was unknown in the time of Moses, and even for a considerable period after him, so that he could not have met with it in any ancient documents which he may have referred to in writing the history of the creation. And, besides, even this interpretation would not explain the fifth

* The Targums of Eben Ezra, Sol. Jarchi, and Jonathan, *in loco.*

verse of chap. iii. where God says, "Behold man is become *as one of us.*" 2dly. This last expression has led most of the fathers, the ancient interpreters, and almost all the English commentators, to admit, in the *plural* of our verse, an indication of a plurality of persons in the Godhead.* Whether this idea be expressed in the verse in question or not, there can be no doubt, at least, that it is scriptural, and that it is clearly stated by St. John in the commencement of his Gospel. Already Jews begin to talk of an *Adam Kadmon,*† or *Ancient Adam,* who, according to them, took part in the creation, and is spoken of in Prov. viii. 22, et seqs. They call this *Ancient Adam* the *cause of causes,* to whom God said in the beginning, "Let us make man," &c. Now, modern critics have established beyond dispute, that this *eternal wis-*

* The ancient theologians have discovered indications of the Trinity also in the first verse of the Bible, both in the plural form of the word *Elohim, God,* (literally, *Gods,*) as also in the word בָּרָא *created,* which contains the initials of אָב Father, בֵּן Son, and רוּחַ Spirit. Though this play upon words, and even letters, is quite natural to the Hebrews, yet we must examine such interpretations with diffidence, and receive them with more sobriety than the ancients and the Catholic theologians. See on this verse, the notes of a critical work of a Catholic Doctor, Professor of Theology at Breslau: Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Test. aus dem hebræischen übersetzt und erklært von T. A. Dereser. Frankfort, 1820.

† In the Book of Zoar, fol. 98, 2.

dom, which *the Lord possessed in the beginning of His way, before His works of old, and which was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was*, &c. (Prov. viii.) is a personification of the *Logos* (the *Word*) of St. John. (i. 1.)* That word, *the angel of God's face*, who appeared to the patriarchs, the *Wisdom* of the Book of Proverbs, the *Shechina (tabernacle of God* among men) of the Jews, the Logos of St. John, that *Word* personified in the Messiah, has been the medium of all the revelations which God has made to mankind. We lay down this fact (for the establishment of which we refer to the authors cited below) at the outset of our explanation of the third chapter of Genesis; it will throw much light upon it, and remove the difficulties, which some have found in the communications of the Lord God with his creature in Eden. Calvin discovers in this verse, both the doctrine of the Trinity and a solemn deliberation of God with His eternal wisdom,† the object of which was, to show the dignity and importance of the being whom

* See Commentaries of Olshausen, Lücke, and Tholuck, upon John i. 1.

† Christiani igitur apposite plures subesse in Deo personas ex hoc testimonio contendunt. Neminem extraneum advocat Deus. Hinc colligimus, intus cum aliquid distinctum invenire: ut certe, æterna ejus sapientia et virtus in ipso residunt. Com. in h. l.

He was going to create. If, from an unwillingness to admit the idea of the Trinity in these Mosaic documents, we confine the whole meaning of this deliberation to this last consideration, (the dignity of man,) it is, however, not the less true, that still there remains no satisfactory explanation of the use of the plural in the passage, much less in the expression, "one of us," in the 22d verse.

2. However this may be, it is, at all events, evident that it was *in the image* of God, and *after His likeness*, that man was created. What is the meaning and extent of this declaration? Let us first briefly determine the signification of the words. We can derive nothing for the illustration of our subject from the subtle distinctions which the Jews have endeavoured to establish between the words *make*, in ver. 26, and *create*, in ver. 27, pretending that the one refers to the soul, and the other to the body, &c. We pass then to the words *image* and *likeness*, which alone require our attention. צלם *image*, *originally* signifies a *shadow;* then the representation of an object, drawn after its shadow, as a profile taken from the shadow of a person; and, lastly, in the ordinary use of the word, every image or resemblance copied from a type, whether it be in colours, wood, stone, or metal. 1 Sam. vi. 5, 11. This word is frequently used in Scripture for the images of false gods. 2 Kings xi. 18; Ezek.

vii. 20; xvi. 17; xxiii. 14, &c. דְּמוּת (resemblance,) signifies also an *image*, a figure, Is. xl. 18; 2 Chron iv. 3; the expression frequently occurs in Ezekiel, to designate the indeterminate figures of his mysterious visions. In the verse under consideration, the two words, *figure* and *resemblance*, are probably synonimous. After St. Augustine, who endeavoured to found on these words the opinion of a trinity in the human soul, the Roman Catholics, and, among others, Bellarmine, have made a distinction between these two words; viz. that צֶלֶם *image*, represented the faculties with which Adam was endowed in virtue of his nature, and דְּמוּת *(resemblance,)* the gratuitous gifts which God imparted to him over and above.* In the language of the schools, the image of God represented the *essence* of the soul, and the likeness its *accidents*. The Mosaic account, however, furnishes no foundation for any such distinction. On the contrary, the sacred historian, in repeating the same idea in the 27th verse, omits the word *resemblance*, and mentions only the *image*, whilst, in chap. v. ver. 1, he mentions the *resemblance* and omits the *image*, which proves that he employs the words indiscriminately for one another. Some have endeavoured to establish a distinction equally subtle between

* De Trinit. b. 10 and 14. Decio Dei i. 11.

the two particles, ב and כ, (in and after;) but this also is without proof; by comparing Exod xxv. 40, and Isa. xliv. 13, any one may be convinced that they are capable of being taken synonimously. It appears, then, that in the meaning of the terms there is no difficulty.

But as the idea of God's image in man is vague, and not clearly defined by Moses, interpreters have, in consequence, at all times, entertained very different opinions on the subject. The difficulty has also been increased by the fact, that the Bible, which is the only certain guide to arrive at the truth, evidently gives many different significations to the expression *image of God.* Meanwhile this subject, as most subjects of a religious nature which are encumbered with difficulties, would be much simplified if every interpreter did not persuade himself, as too often happens, that his own particular opinion contained the *whole* truth. 1st. Some, resting upon the words which immediately follow those under our consideration, have supposed that the whole of the image of God in man consisted in the dominion which the Creator gave him over the inferior animals, and, in general, over the world. Thus think the Socinians, many Arminians, and even St. Chrysostom. This idea is, in part, correct, but not *absolutely* so, as we shall see hereafter. 2dly. Others have explained the image of God as consist-

ing only in the superiority and excellence of man's body, and in the admirable mechanism of its conformation. We deny not this opinion altogether; but to see in it the whole truth, is too gross an *anthropomorphism* to be admitted. God is a *Spirit:* can then His image consist entirely in the *body* of man? 3dly. Others, again, have imagined that the image of God in man consisted exclusively in the faculties of the understanding, (which give him so vast a superiority over the animals,) in his reason, and the liberty which he possessed to choose between good and evil. Thus Tertullian, (Adv. Marc. 11. 5, 6.) Thus also, at an earlier period, Philo of Alexandria, who mixed up with his biblical opinions the ideas of the Platonic philosophy. Here, again, we admit that there is some truth, and even much truth, in this opinion; but surely it is not the whole truth. Doubtless God is a Spirit, and His image must be spiritual. But is not God also essentially a moral being? Is it not His *moral* perfections that, even now, speak most powerfully to our hearts, and that He must have taken the greatest pleasure in seeing reflected in the creature of His love? Such is the consideration which, 4thly, has led a great majority of the fathers of the church, and of theologians of all times, to admit that the image of God in man must chiefly have consisted in his moral faculties, which were a reflec-

tion of the perfections of his Creator. This is our opinion also. And we proceed to show that it is founded upon the Word of God, as well as upon reason, and a sound knowledge of the works of the Supreme Being, from whose hands we have sufficient ground to believe nothing can proceed but what is perfect. But we wish to avoid the fault which we have laid to the charge of the greater part of human systems—that of seeing the whole truth on this subject in one particular opinion. In opposition to this, we admit *all* the opinions which we have just enumerated, placing them, however, in a subordinate, or, if you please, a co-ordinate rank with the last. By adopting this extended view of the subject, we shall avoid a great many of the difficulties which encumber it, and, among others, those which are involved in that interminable question, Does man, or does he not, still retain the image of God?

4thly. That man was created with moral faculties which he has in a great measure lost, is proved, first, by the simple fact, that the Scripture every where supposes him not to be what he ought to be, and that it every where calls upon him to become what he formerly was, in order to find happiness in God. The Bible employs on this subject the most striking images, the strongest and most explicit terms: it is necessary for us "to be raised from the dead, and to

pass from death unto life, to be born again, to be converted, to become new creatures, to be delivered from the bondage of corruption and of sin, to put off the old man, to put on the new man, to be renewed in the spirit of our mind," &c. &c. Moreover, the Bible, from beginning to end, proclaims one great fact, which predominates over all these exhortations, renders their meaning intelligible, and their accomplishment possible, and which of itself alone proves our proposition; I mean the great work of man's redemption. This work would be incomprehensible and useless if man were still in the condition in which God created him; for how is it possible to suppose that God created a being in such a state that he stood in need of being *created again?* Now from what man is required to *become*, we may infer what he originally *was*. And this parallel, which, when well considered, throws much light upon the primitive condition of man, is not a mere dream of our imagination, but the result of clear and definite statements of Scripture. St. Paul, in two parallel passages (Eph. iv. 23, 24, and Col. iii. 10.) shows the necessity of our first putting off the *old man*, that is, the vicious disposition which we have by nature, the carnal man, the body of sin; and, secondly, putting on the *new man*. Paul here opposes the *new man*, (Καινον ἄνθρωπον or νεον ἄνθρωπον, two expressions which some suppose to

be synonymous,* which, however, is of little importance to our subject), to the *old man.*† The new man becomes such by a new creation; it is created *after God.* Eph. iv. 24. The expression, κατα Θέον, *after God,* is synonymous with Κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αυτον, *after the image of Him that created him;* Col. iii. 10. We have here the very expressions of Gen. i. 27, "*In the image of God created he him,*" Κατ' εἰκόνα Θεοῦ ἐποίεσεν ἀυτόν, (version of the LXX. which the apostle made use of.) Whether the creation here spoken of be the primitive creation mentioned in Genesis, or that by which man is renewed after the image of God by the Holy Ghost (upon which there are different opinions), the force of the passage is the same as it regards our subject. I am disposed to think that it refers to the latter; but, nevertheless, it is equally impossible not to see here an evident allusion to Gen. i. 26, 27. With regard to the nature and extent of that new creation, which restores to man the image of God, it would be a great mistake were we to confine it to a mere external work, consisting in a change or reformation of what is vicious in man's outward conduct. On the contrary, let it be observed here, (for

* See for the difference of these two words, the Commentary of F. Bahr, on the epistle to Col. iii. 9, 10.

† See for the sense and origin of this expression, Tholuck on the epistle to Rom. vi. 6.

this leads us to the point at which we aim, namely, to determine what was the image of God,) that Paul in these passages teaches us, 1st. Wherein this creation consists; and, 2dly. What is the state of the soul when thus created again. According to Eph. iv. 23, the renewing of man takes place in the very essence of his being. The expression, "*In the spirit of your mind,*" is a weak phrase and scarcely intelligible. The version of Ostervald, "*In your spirit and in your mind,*" is more clear, but does not fully render the original. Sacy paraphrases it without entirely expressing the meaning: *In the interior of your soul.* The word νους, *mind,* comprehends the whole intellectual, spiritual, and moral part of our being. Schleusner thus defines it: *Animus cum omni sensu, cogitatione et affectu, et omnibus suis facultatibus*—(The soul, with its sensation, thought, feeling, and all its faculties.) The note in Meyer's Bible, on the passage, gives the meaning tolerably well: *Renewed* in *the inmost depths of the soul,* or *intimately* and *spiritually.* The change must take place *in the whole man, and in the spirit which animates him.* In the *psycology* of the Bible, *spirit* (πνεῦμα) is opposed to the *soul* (ψυχη), as designating a nobler and more spiritual part of our nature, that which is superior to the principle of life, the *anima* of the Latins. It is in this part of our being that the renewal takes place.

Paul continues, *In* or *for knowledge* (εἰς, ἐπίγνωσιν) Col. iii. 10. This knowledge is not only the *means* to arrive at the possession of the image of God, but it is the end, (as the preposition εἰς indicates,) it is the initiation of the soul into the life of God, and the contemplation of his perfections. When he has attained this point, man bears *anew* the image of Him that created him, and the characteristic and fundamental feature of that image is *righteousness and true holiness.* Eph. iv. 24. (ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας.) Righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) is the conformity of man and of his whole life to the will of God; holiness (ὁσιότητι) is moral perfection by means of communion with God. Such, according to Scripture, and in the moral sense of the words, is the image of God. Such is the object which is continually set before us, and which we are required to seek after. Nor has God contented Himself with merely describing that image to us in His word; He has been pleased to exhibit it to us in all its beauty; Christ, the Word made flesh, *is the image of the invisible God.* Col. i. 15; 2 Cor. iv. 4. Now we are to become like Him by our union with Him; it is in this resemblance that St. John places the perfection of the children of God, which shall be attained in a better world, where *we shall see Him as He is.* 1 John iii. 2.

If it be asked, did Adam possess this image of

God, *fully developed*, as we have described it from the Scriptures, we must confess that we do not think so. Many things in the history of the fall prove, on the contrary, that Adam was still, as to the development of the noble faculties, intellectual and moral, which God bestowed upon him, in a state of comparative infancy. Thus he had no consciousness of good and evil within or without himself; he knew not evil, and in consequence he did the will of God from a kind of propensity of his nature, or a moral instinct. But he had, in his mind, in his will, and in his affections, all the faculties which, developed by the exercise of a free obedience and by communion with God, would have arrived at the perfection of the Divine image. Created perfectly upright (יָשָׁר Prov. vii. 29.) his whole being tended towards God, the point of perfection. Every thing in him was in order; the inferior faculties of his body, which subsequently became so impure, under the name of *passions*, were in subjection to the more noble powers of his soul (understanding, will, affections), and these in their turn to a power directly emanating from God, which the Bible calls *Spirit*, (רוּחַ πνεῦμα,) which man was to receive more and more abundantly by communion with God.

Man having become, by the fall, ἄνομος (a law unto himself, his own centre) lost his *uprightness*, and took an opposite direction from that of

God. He received his impressions and the law which he obeyed from without. Separated from their source, the harmony of his nature was destroyed, and the faculties of his body acquired an empire over those of his soul, and these again over the spirit. This is the reason why, in Scripture, *flesh and blood*—the grossest part of man's nature—are considered as the constant enemy of the spiritual life. (Gal. v. 17. 19.) Hence, as *flesh and blood* * *cannot inherit the kingdom* of heaven, (1 Cor. xv. 50.) and as *that which is born of the flesh is flesh*, (John iii. 6,) a man must *be born again*, (or from above, *ἄνωθεν*, John iii. 3,) before he can see the kingdom of God; that is, he must recover his primitive direction, and receive from God the *life* which he has lost, the *law* whose yoke he has cast

* If we consider the work of redemption in this point of view, we shall see that *the shedding of blood, without which there is no remission of sins*, (Heb. ix. 22.) and the crucifying of the flesh, were indispensable to wrest from flesh and blood their usurped empire over the nobler part of man. Christ, the second Adam, the type and representative of human nature, has accomplished this work; he shed his blood *through the Eternal Spirit*, Heb. ix. 14, to which he restored its empire over us, by purifying flesh and blood from dead works. (ib.) We become partakers of this privilege by our union with Christ. In this point of view, animal sacrifices, which were a shedding of blood, and were instituted after the fall, were to all enlightened persons, under the Old Testament, a continual preaching, both of their corruption, and also of their spiritual regeneration.

off. It is in this sense we say, that man has lost the image of God, and that he must recover it again, as we have already seen (No. 4.)

7. But here a difficulty presents itself, arising from those passages of Scripture, which speak of the image of God in man in a different sense, and seem to admit that man still possesses that image. Some persons who entertain partial views on this subject, resting on these passages, pretend that man has lost nothing by the fall, but that he is still as God created him. Those who see the image of God exclusively in the dominion which was given man over the inferior animals, say, that he has still that dominion. Those who see it in his body, or in his understanding, or in general in the dignity of man, observe that he has still that dignity, and that the Bible points out the image of God as still existing in it. Is it not said, as a reason for the law against murder, promulgated after the deluge, that in the image of God made He man? Gen ix. 6. Is it not said, to exalt the dignity of man above that of woman, that he is "the image of God?" 1 Cor. xi. 7. Is it not said, in fine, to show the evil which is committed by the tongue, that "therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of God?" James iii. 9. How, then, can it be pretended that man no longer bears the image of God?—To us the difficulty is

nothing. As we admit all the senses, or the whole extent of the image of God, (No. 3,) we can also admit with Scripture, and without contradiction, that man has lost the image of God in a *moral* point of view, in his soul and in his spirit, and at the same time, that he still claims that image in the other meanings of it; for example, in the dominion which he possesses over the creature, in his body, in his understanding, (which, however, is enveloped in darkness as to the things of God,) in a word, in his dignity and superiority over the rest of the creation. And if even in these secondary meanings we believe that the Divine image has been considerably altered by the fall, we acknowledge also that, in a moral point of view, there remains in man precious traces of this noble image, such as the voice of conscience, a confused feeling of responsibility and dependence, notions of right and wrong, &c. These ruins of the majestic edifice, drawn from beneath the rubbish under which they lie, may yet serve to raise the edifice anew, provided they be based on Christ, the chief corner-stone.

8. Although this article, upon a subject as important as it is difficult, has been extended beyond the limits which I prescribed to myself, I shall not conclude without proposing for discussion some ideas on certain faculties of man in his primitive state, which I shall designate hypothetic, because they are

not all founded upon the Bible, which is the only sure source of knowledge. These matters, some of which are very interesting, have been communicated to me, chiefly, by a young christian philosopher, Mr. F. Rougemont, whose opinions have the greater weight with me, because he has deeply studied every thing which concerns man and nature. The first of these notions regards the general state of the first man, with regard both to his soul and body; I shall merely quote his own words, without either combating or justifying the theory which they put forth:—"And first, what was the state of man in his primeval condition, in a general point of view? Superior, inferior, or equal to that of the regenerated Christian, the Christian in a life to come, when once disengaged from his body of death, and clothed with his spiritual body? Inferior, I think. Adam was made *a living soul*, Gen. ii. 7, the second Adam, *a quickening spirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45; and we are brethren of Christ. Adam, then, was chiefly ψυχη *(soul;* see No. 4, for the scriptural distinction between *soul* and *spirit;)* called to develop and improve his powers, he was to acquire and receive the πνεῦμα (spirit). His body was not σαρκικός (carnal) as it is since the fall, nor πνευματικός (spiritual) as it will be in a future life, but ψυχικος (possessing the soul, the principle of life) which is

unknown to us.* It was immortal, Gen. i. 26. ii. 7; Rom. v. 12. 17. There would only have remained for him the passage from the ψυχικον to the spiritual body, a passage which may be considered as having a slight analogy with death.†

9. Another opinion, which I shall not pass over in silence, an opinion already known to the fathers of the church, put in circulation by the venerable Meyer of Frankfort, and received by many Christians of the mystic school, is that man was originally created *androgynal*, that is, *man-woman*, of a simple and yet multiple nature, and having the faculty of propagating himself in conformity with his *psychical* body, "Thus the two fundamental principles of man's nature, the one active, the other passive, which are represented by the two sexes, would have been united in the same being, a supposition which has nothing improbable in it. That being was one and yet multiple, like the Trinity of which he was an image." The advocates of this opinion

* This distinction is established by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 44, with this difference, that according to the apostle, the body, ψυχικον, which is opposed to the *spiritual* body, would appear to be the present state of man. It is σῶμα ψυχικὸν, it shall rise σῶμα πνευματικόν. Modern languages, having no word to render ψυχικον, translate it differently; the French, by *corps animal*, which is correct in the sense of the Latin *anima*, but scarcely intelligible in French. Luther translates it by *sinnlicher leib*, the English, *natural body*.

† On the question of immortality, see on ch. iii. 19.

found it on the circumstance, that in Gen. i. 26, 27, there is no mention of the creation of woman; and that in ver. 31 of the same chapter, God, after having created man, pronounced that every thing was very good, but afterwards, in ch. ii. 18, the Lord declares, "it is not good for man to be alone," which seems to imply a contradiction. Finally, resting upon the words which occur immediately after the account of man's giving names to all the animals, "but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him," they have concluded that the first man conceived a desire for a help meet for him, which led to a change in the original design of his creation. And that therefore God formed the woman, whose creation is only mentioned in ch. ii. ver. 21—24. The following are, in a few words, the reasons which appear to us to combat this opinion: 1st. It is not correct to say that there is no mention made of the creation of the woman in Gen. i. 26, 27; for in ver. 27. הָאָדָם, (man) is not a proper name, but a common and collective noun, as the article ה abundantly proves. Now in a thousand passages of Scripture, the same word *haadam* (man) designates humanity, the human race, comprising the two sexes. 2dly. In the same verse it is said, "male and female created he *them*," in the plural, which could not be applied to one individual, even though he were multiple. The same expression occurs again ch. v.

1, 2, where there can be no question that man and woman are intended. 3dly. Though the creation of the woman is related subsequently, this does not prove that she was not included in the first account, for there are also *two* accounts of the creation of man; one, ch. i. 26, 27, the other, ch. ii. 7. Moses merely gives more details upon a fact previously related in a few words, which may have arisen from his having drawn up his history from different documents, or from the necessity of stating how "woman was taken out of man." 1 Cor. xi. 8. 4thly. In other passages of Scripture where the creation of man is spoken of, there is nothing favouring the opinion which we combat, nor is it ever once alluded to; Meyer himself does not pretend any thing of the kind; on the contrary, there are declarations from which we may clearly infer that the design of God *from the beginning* was, that *two* beings should be united by marriage, which was instituted in Eden. Such is the declaration of Jesus Christ, Matt. xix. 4—6, "He which made *them at the beginning*, made *them* male and female," &c. 5thly. In fine, the imaginary being whom this opinion supposes, would have nothing analogous to it in nature, not even in the vegetable kingdom, in which the various species of plants, &c. are propagated, as is very well known, by means of two generating powers. This consideration ought to have con-

siderable weight with every one who has remarked the constant harmony in the works of God.

Finally. If I have been obliged to combat this opinion, with all deference to those who maintain it, there is a third and last of these hypothetical views of the primitive state of man, which I will only quote in the words of Mr. Rougemont, happy here to share entirely with him in his view of the subject. "In my opinion, man possessed another faculty, which exists inactive in us all, manifests itself only in some, and even in them never but in sickness and in *anomalous* states, under the form and name of animal magnetism. With our senses and our carnal body, we receive sensations and act upon nature only through the medium of the senses and the body. Adam received sensations and acted by his soul itself, and in a manner much more independent of his body than we do; magnetic facts, so rare in the present day, were his usual manner of acting; and it is by means of this magnetic faculty which is in us, that the Spirit of God acts upon fallen man in cases of miracles, even as that same Spirit in the moral life, addresses the will, purifies it, restores it, and raises it to a higher degree of power. In the magnetic state, a person sees, hears, &c. without the intervention of the senses, and by a general faculty which the soul possesses, of perceiving sensations of itself. It sees, for example, what is passing far off

from it; it sees what the eyes never see, the invisible qualities of things, the moral character of a man, the essence of a plant, or an animal.* Now, we learn from Gen. ii. 19, 20, that Adam, on seeing the animals pass before him, gave them names, and as in Scripture the name is equivalent to the essence, he named them according to their secret nature, their individual qualities. The magnetic faculty is well attested; the Academy of Medicine at Paris, so long opposed to it, has at length acknowledged its reality. This faculty, which, like every other, is good or bad according to the use that is made of it, must, like all our other faculties, have existed in the first man; for the fall and sin cannot have endowed man with new powers. I see not what can be said in opposition to these considerations."

Chap. III.

Here we must first of all discuss a preliminary question, upon which the entire interpretation of the chapter depends, namely, whether the Mosaic account of the fall of man be *historical and literal*, or a mere allegory, enveloping some moral truth, or only a fable or religious apologue, in which the author intended to set forth his philo-

* It is well known, by an experiment repeated a hundred times, that sick persons magnetized often, indicate at a great distance, the medical plant which will cure them.

sophical opinions on the origin of evil? Such is the question which has divided the opinions of theologians, from the time of Philo, Justin Martyr, and Origen, to that of Eichhorn, Hengstenberg, and Tholuck. We can understand how men who, through the study of metaphysical sciences and a false civilization, have lost the tastes, the spirit, and the simplicity of the first ages of the world, may have been tempted to mix up with the momentous question of the origin of evil, philosophical speculations which are not to be found in the recital of Moses. They hoped, in this manner, to avoid the objections and sarcasms of those who denied the Divine authority of the Scriptures. And, besides, it cannot be denied that the account in question, presents formidable difficulties to human reason: these difficulties they have endeavoured to remove; but have they attained their object by speculation? The first attempts at allegorical interpretation are due to Philo of Alexandria, (De Opificio Mundi, p. 104, seqq. ed. Pfeif.) In his footsteps have trodden, first, Origen, who found here a noble field for the exercise of his favourite system of interpretation; Ambrose, *(L. de Paradiso)* Clement of Alexandria, and others. Many writers of the Roman Catholic church have adopted the allegorical method of explanation; and, since the middle of the last century, rationalism, going

a step further, has reduced the account of Moses to a mere *mythos*, from which every thing like *fact* is excluded, and in which there remains as a reality, neither tree of knowledge, nor serpent, nor temptation; in a word, it represented it as a piece of pure fiction, like one of Æsop's fables; thus Eichhorn, Gabler, Paul, and others. Some of these interpreters, however, are willing to admit reality in some parts of the account, while they explain the rest as fabulous; but this system is untenable. Where are we to look for the marks of distinction, or the limits of truth and fiction? Evidently the whole account must be literal, or it must be all allegorical or all mythological.

However, from the earliest period of the christian church, the great majority of the fathers have seen, in the chapter under consideration, a recital purely and simply historical; a fact of immense importance, and of the deepest significance, notwithstanding the child-like simplicity of the language, and, in general, of the manner, in which it is related. Thus have thought Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, Augustine, and Theodoret, to whom may be added all the reformers and Protestant theologians, until the rise of rationalism in Germany.* It is unnecessary

* It is a mistake to suppose that all the German theologians are allegorists; the literal sense has found an able defender in Lüderwald, (Die allegorische, Erklærung der drei

to say that all the English commentators are literalists.

Now where does the truth lie? I acknowledge that, in the commencement of my researches on this subject, I was inclined to decide in favour of explaining it, not by a *mythos*, which could scarcely ever enter into the mind of any one who had a respect for the Bible as the Word of God, but by an interpretation at once real, as to the principal fundamental ideas of it, but, at the same time, allegorical or figurative as to the form with which those ideas are clothed. And surely, when one sees a christian exegetist, like Tholuck, decide for this interpretation, one may believe that it is not incompatible with a living and enlightened faith in the Divine authority of the Word of God. This profound theologian, who ridicules the opinion of Luther, that, previous to the fall, the serpent walked erect and on feet, like a cock, thus expresses his ideas. "As every age imparts to the facts which it hands down to posterity its own peculiar colour, the duty of the historian is to distinguish this colour from the facts themselves, in order to consider them *objectively*,

ersten Cap. Mosis, insonderheit des Sünden-falls, in ihrem Urgrunde vorgestellt. Helmstæt, 1781;) and also in our own time, Hengstenberg, to whom no one will deny the knowledge and genius of an oriental scholar, has declared for that interpretation, the practical utility of which has been fully demonstrated by Dr. Grœlur.

(in themselves) as far as that is practicable with traditionary facts. Now, if we examine the first chapters of Genesis, we shall soon be convinced that the accounts there given bear the colour of a very remote time, a time when men lived in a child-like simplicity, and when, consequently, their manner of expressing themselves was in figures, speaking to the senses, (sinnlich-bildlich) as is natural to simple and child-like hearts. Whether God be represented as walking in the garden in the wind of the day, or an angel be said to guard the entrance of the garden with a flaming sword, all these expressions betray, in their figurative simplicity, the characteristics of the remote antiquity from whence they emanate. In the most ancient traditions of other nations we find the same colouring; we must then seek the ideas which antiquity has deposited in these figurative paintings. When the principal figure in a picture is explained, it spreads its light on all around it; now, in the history in question, the most prominent object is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tasting of whose fruit draws down upon our first parents all the misery in which humanity is involved. That we have a figure here cannot be questioned. The tradition of India speaks of a *tree of knowledge;* that of Thibet of a *root of immortality;* that of the Persians of a *spring of eternal life;* all so

many images of the same thing. To eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, signifies simply *to enter into this knowledge*. Thus the meaning of the figure is this: man, who, conformably to his destination, hitherto enjoyed a holy innocence, man, who had no other will than that of God, (as will be the case with us in eternity,) turned aside from his destination, became *autonomous*, and refused any longer to recognize the Divine law as the supreme law of his life. Such is the point of view in which we ought to explain the other circumstances of the recital."*

Notwithstanding the authority of so great a name, and the prepossession which I had in favour of a figurative interpretation, an attentive study of this chapter has convinced me that such an interpretation cannot be true. The following arguments, which I shall merely mention, are my principal reasons for coming to this conclusion.

1. The *principle* of such an interpretation is bad and dangerous. It has led the German *idealists* into errors as great, and perhaps of the same nature, though they are far from avowing it, as the allegorical system invented by the doctors of the Alexandrian school, and in our days followed by

* Die Lehre von der Sünde und vom Versöhner. 2 Auff. S. 264.

Christians otherwise worthy of every respect.* The moment we cease to see in the historical books, purely and simply historical statements, (of course without denying their spiritual import,) we open an unlimited field to the imagination and to the most dangerous speculations. If we *idealize* the third chapter of Genesis, that is, if we receive the *idea*, while we reject the historical facts which serve as its foundation and constitute its reality, why should we not do the same with regard to the creation of the world, the deluge, the miracles of Moses, the conception of Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost, his miracles, or the conversion of St. Paul? It is well known that these are not gratuitous suppositions, but that modern idealism has realized them. True, this *à priori* reasoning would have no force, if it could be proved that the author of our chapter had intended to give, not *a history*, but figures.

2. But as every thing, on the contrary, proves that the divine historian *narrates*, both as it regards the *form* as the substance of his account, and not that he *invents*, we draw from hence a second proof in favour of the literal interpretation.

* This system is combated by M. Cellerier, Jun. in his Introduction to the Reading of the Sacred Books, p. 409. Though we are far from admitting all the opinions of this author upon the subject, we nevertheless acknowledge that his work contains very important truths.

The history of the fall of man is found in a book where every thing is historical; it follows the account of the creation, and precedes the description of the crimes of mankind; we now see man such as he became by this fall, and in all this, there is not a word, nor an incident, from whence it can be inferred, with any show of foundation, that Moses, suddenly cutting short his historical narration, introduces in this place, an episode taken from without the domain of facts. On the contrary, all the elements in this narrative are borrowed from nature itself. Is there mention of a serpent? it is taken "from among the beasts of the field which the Lord God had made." Are the trees of knowledge and of life spoken of? they are among the trees of the garden. It is the same with the penalty of sin denounced against Adam and Eve, and, in fact, with all the incidents in the account.

3. It is true that those who adopt the figurative interpretation, are willing also to admit an historical fact in the fall. Tholuck, for example, says that Moses, without any doubt, relates this fact as matter of history, (als Geschichte) and he rejects the opinion of those, who see in it only a fable. But is not this a manifest contradiction? According to this system, the fall is an idea, and not a fact; for what is there in the account, in this case,

to which the character of a fact attaches? If the tree of the knowledge of good and evil be but a figure, to what did God annex the command which placed man in a state of dependence and responsibility? And if there was no commandment, where was the sin? Where then would be the violation of an order so severely punished? How could Adam have known his sin? How could he have been filled with fear and shame? If the serpent, and the insinuation of the seducer which took place through its means, be but figures, where is the temptation? What was the object of it? A temptation without an object to which it impels us, is an absurdity. What then is the meaning of the *idea*, that man "turned aside from his destination, became *autonomous*, and refused to recognize the divine law?" Yea, further; if the temptation did not come from without, and had not a determinate object, man fell by himself, and hence he must have had in him not only the *possibility* of sinning, but also the disposition, *the desire;* a consequence, which the authors of the opinion which we combat, are far from being willing to admit!*

4. We may *idealize* the history of the fall, to avoid difficulties and prevent objections; but we shall find, in thus doing, that we only multiply

* See the words of Tholuck himself, quoted V. 1.

them. Nothing proves this more strongly than the embarrassment and uncertainty of the *idealists*, the arbitrariness of their interpretations, and the endless diversity of opinion which exists among them on the subject.

5. Finally, in support of the literal interpretation, we find in the New Testament, frequent allusions to the history of the fall, in which there is nothing indicating that the sacred writers understood it in a figurative sense. 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14; Rom. v. 12.

In proof of the opinion for which I contend, I might also cite the tradition of a great many nations, which connect the origin of evil with a fact similar to that related by Moses, a circumstance which can only be explained by the influence of the Book of Genesis upon the religious belief of the most ancient nations of the East, and which establishes, at least indirectly, the reality of the fact. But we shall have occasion to advert to this tradition again, in speaking of the temptation. We have here, we think, sufficient to prove that an arbitrary interpretation, which renounces the simply historical meaning, has no foundation whatsoever to rest upon. However, we must beware lest, in adhering to the letter, we overlook the spirit. If we refuse to idealize the facts, we must, on the other hand, guard against materializing the ideas; and, moreover, we must be content to let one dark cloud hang over an

order of things which is almost entirely unknown to us. It is a characteristic which becomes fallen man, and ennobles, rather than degrades his knowledge, to be sufficiently humble frequently to say, *I know not.*

Ver. 1. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made; and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" According to the principle of interpretation which we have laid down, we do not hesitate to admit here a real serpent, and not merely a form which the tempter had assumed. The word employed in the passage being generic, we can only form conjectures as to the species of serpent intended. Some have supposed the flying serpent of Isaiah (xiv. 29.) to be meant, and as in this passage, as well as in *Numbers* xxi. 6, 7, this animal is called שָׂרָף *saraph*, in the plural, *seraphim*, the same name which is given to the celestial winged beings of which Isaiah speaks, vi. 2, 6, some authors* have inferred that the tempter approached Eve in the form of some angel whom she had been accustomed to see in Eden, and that on this account she felt no surprise at hearing him speak. (Comp. 2 Cor. xi. 14. "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of

* See Gill's Exposition of the Old Testament, in loco.

light.") Gesenius, (Dict. Heb. on the word שָׂרָף) who considers the seraphim of Isaiah to have been symbolical beings, thinks that they derive their name from some analogy which they had with that species of serpent. He shows, that in the symbolical language of the Hebrews and Egyptians, the serpent was an emblem of the power of healing (the serpent of Esculapius) and of wisdom. This animal has been worshipped by many idolatrous people as a being of a superior order. All we can infer from these coincidences is, that the serpent which seduced Eve was, perhaps, more adapted to deceive and be an instrument of temptation, than the ordinary serpent of our countries would have been.

However, from the first opening of our chapter, we are astonished to find the author of this history attributing to a serpent the temptation of our first parents. This animal, destitute of reason, speaks, thinks, reasons.—Assuredly, we are constrained to say, there is here a secret intelligence which acts; the serpent can be no more than an instrument. This, however, is an assertion which it would be sufficiently difficult to prove, did not subsequent revelations throw the clearest light upon the subject. Moses, it is true, mentions only the serpent: he relates the history of the temptation and fall as it must have appeared to the first man, without

explaining the facts, or tracing them back to their cause; here, especially, he makes no mention of Satan, and that for good reasons.* Notwithstanding all this, the proofs in favour of the above-mentioned opinion appear to me convincing. I will specify the principal after Hengstenberg.†

1. The first proof, which, perhaps is no more than an inference favourable to the idea that an evil spirit was the instigator of the temptation, is, that without this, the whole narrative is unintelligible. It is impossible that the seduction of an irrational animal could have made Eve fall into sin: evil, then, must have had another source, another author, or else there was no temptation at all. It is objected, that the conversation of Eve with the serpent ought not to be taken literally; we shall return to this objection shortly.

2. The tradition of ancient nations is entirely in favour of our proposition; their ideas upon the origin of evil have evidently had their foundation in the facts of the Mosaic recital, and in a true interpretation of these facts. Thus the Persians, according to their Zendavesta, (translated into German by Kleuker, Vol. iii. pp. 84, 85,) believe that the first pair, *Meschia* and *Meschianeh*, were

* See Ohlshausen Biblischer Comment. Vol. i. p. 274, Note.

† Christologie des Alt. Test. Vol. I. p. 27.

created by God, good, pure, and destined to happiness, upon condition of their persevering in humility, obedience to the divine law, and in purity of thought, word, and deed; but they were deceived by Ahriman, the genius of evil, "that cruel being, who from the beginning has only sought to deceive," who, by inducing them to eat certain fruits, made them fall off from God, and plunged them into misery. These same sacred books, (Zendav. iii. 62.) represent Ahriman as coming from heaven to earth in the form of a serpent, and giving the name of one species of serpent to another evil spirit.

3. The Jews themselves ascribe to Satan the seduction of the first man. "God created man to be incorruptible, (ἐπ' ἀφθαρσία) and made him to be the image of His own likeness." Wisd. ii. 23, 24. In the later Jewish writings, Sammail, the prince of evil spirits, is called נחש הקדמוני, the *old serpent*, or only נחש *the serpent*, because he seduced Eve under the form of that animal. In fine, this doctrine was the popular belief among the Jews in our Lord's time.*

4. But what places the truth which we are en-

* A passage of the Book of Sohar, quoted by Tholuck in his Com. on John viii. 44, designates the wicked thus: "Children of the old serpent, who slew Adam and all who descend from him.

deavouring to prove beyond all doubt, is the positive declarations of the New Testament. These I have quoted in my meditation on the first verses of the chapter. I will, therefore, only bring forward here those which are necessary, as an accompaniment to some observations which I shall make. In 2 Cor. ii. 3, St. Paul tells us, that "the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety." It is true, that like Moses, he mentions only the serpent, but who can believe that the apostle ascribed to this animal alone the whole temptation? His meaning is explained by another expression which has come from his pen: "The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly," Rom. xvi. 20, in which we can scarcely fail to recognize an allusion to Gen. iii. 15. In John viii. 44, our Lord says of Satan, that "he was a murderer from the beginning." True, indeed, some commentators, comparing this passage with 1 John iii. 12, have seen in it an allusion, not to Gen. iii., but to the murder of Cain. Thus Cyril of Alexandria, and in modern times, Nitzsch and Lücke; but is not this merely creating difficulties for the pleasure of removing them? What need is there to explain the passage under consideration by 1 John iii. 12? What connexion is there between the murder of Cain and that declaration of our Lord—"Ye are of your father, the devil; he was a murderer from the beginning. . . . . He is a liar,

and the father of lies?" The double reference which these words have to the temptation, and to the state of the Jews at the time, is evident: "Ye are the children of the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning, when he plunged Adam and his posterity into death, *for ye seek to kill me*," (40.) Ye are the children of him who is the father of lies, who uttered the first lie, *Ye shall not die*, (Gen. iii. 4,) and who introduced falsehood into the moral life of man, for behold "because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not," (45.) Again, let us compare this with 1 John iii. 8, and we shall see that in these two passages, the temptation and fall of man alone are spoken of, while 1 John iii. 12, expresses an isolated thought, which has no connexion with the subject above-mentioned, but was intended to establish a striking contrast between the charity recommended by the apostle, and the hatred, of which the murder of Cain was the first frightful expression. Hence *from the beginning* (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) ought to be taken in its strictest sense, *from Eden*. This is the only tenable interpretation, and it is that which has been adopted by Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, Calvin, Luther, Tholuck, Hengstenberg, &c. Another passage equally evident with that which we have just referred to, occurs in Apoc. xii. 9, xx. 2. Here we find Satan described as the "old serpent,—which deceiveth the world;" now we have seen,

under *head* 3, and in the note, that the Jews gave this designation to the devil on account of the seduction of man by means of a serpent. And as St. John adds, that this old serpent is *the devil and Satan*, there cannot be any doubt that the author of the Apocalypse alluded to the temptation in Eden.*

To refute the objections which have been raised against this doctrine would lead us too far beyond the limits of this Essay, and besides, if it be proved by the Word of God, human reasonings cannot shake it. Some of these objections we shall meet as we proceed, and I shall here mention but one, which we continually hear repeated, though from its nature it ought to occasion but little difficulty to those who acknowledge the authority of the Word of God. "How," it is asked, "can we reconcile the history of the temptation and fall of man with the wisdom and goodness of God? How could He have allowed Satan to employ a temptation, of which He foresaw, with unerring certainty, the fatal issue?" This is a question which the

* See Vitringa Apoc. Joh. expos. et illustrata, p. 726. Alluditur autem absque dubitatione ad locum, Gen. iii. ubi Satanas qui Evam matrem nostram tentavit et seduxit, allegoricè ערוּם dicitur. Hæc haud dubie est certa et visa sententia loci, &c. This author then gives many conclusive reasons for his interpretation.

commentator might very well decline answering; for when it is once proved that God has done or permitted any thing, what right has the proud reason of man to demand of Him an account of it? What God does, has in Himself its final reason: He has done it because He has done it. "Would to God," said Calvin, previous to answering this question, "that men would allow themselves to be judged by God, instead of, with an impious temerity, calling him into judgment!" This question evidently resolves itself into another, which is attended with even still greater difficulties; namely, Why has not God, after providing a remedy for moral evil, rendered that remedy universally efficacious? Why did He not instantaneously annihilate sin by redemption? Why are there more than six millions of heathen left without the knowledge of Christ? God could convert and sanctify them all in the twinkling of an eye, just as He might have prevented the temptation and fall: why has He not done so? Before such awful depths it behoves not man to lift up a proud front to heaven, and interrogate his Supreme Judge, but to bow down to the dust, to adore and be silent! If, instead of tracing this question down to our own time, to show that it still remains unanswerable, we go back to ages before the fall, and even before the creation of this world, we shall find it meeting us in all its force;

for as the temptation came from without, it is not in Eden that we must look for the origin of evil. Satan, a spiritual, intelligent being, and once pure, fell before man. (John viii. 44. "He *persevered* or abode not, οὐχ ἑστηκεν, in the truth.") Now who will explain to us the mystery of his fall? It appears, then, that however we may torture and twist this question, the solution of it remains the secret of God alone. One word of illustration, however, drawn from the nature of man and his relations with God, we may be permitted to say on the subject. Adam, before his fall, was in a state of innocence, of which he had no consciousness; he knew, by experience, neither good nor evil. He only had all the physical, moral, and intellectual faculties which were necessary to enable him to attain the highest perfection by obedience to the will of God, and by the trial of that obedience. But obedience supposes a law; and God gave him one. It was also necessary that there should be the possibility or freedom to violate that law; God gave that also. The idea of obedience cannot exist without these conditions. If, then, God, foreseeing the issue of the trial, had averted the temptation, and rendered disobedience impossible, he would have taken away from the creature the means of moral perfection which He had given him; Adam would have continued in his passive innocence, of

which he had no consciousness, and out of the sphere of the laws of his development.

Now it was better, as Hengstenberg observes,* since man refused to continue in well doing, and to

* "The Bible represents man as placed between two worlds by which he is capable of being influenced, and which are one day to divide the human race between them: the kingdom of God, of light, of the Spirit, and that of Satan, of darkness, of the spirit of the world (1 Cor. ii. 12). Adam had three ways to choose: 1st. Not to touch either of the two trees—the symbols of evil and of good, of death and of life—(for he was not commanded to eat of the tree of life,) that is to say, to remain a *living soul*, (1 Cor. xv. 45,) innocent and pure, to cultivate the garden of Eden, (Gen. ii. 15,) to keep it, and to defend it, a state which was possible to Adam alone; we, now fallen, cannot regain our innocence; we can only drive out the spirit of the world by that of God. 2adly. To receive the Spirit of God, to eat of the tree of life, appropriate to himself eternal life, which is in Christ Jesus, become a quickening spirit, in a word, pass to his second state *(perfection.)* In this case the earth would have remained beautiful as it was, and as it shall become (2 Pet. iii. 13; Apoc. xxi. 1.) The Pentecost would have taken place at the earliest period of the human race; there would neither have been the incarnation nor the sacrifice of Christ, nor the resurrection of the dead, nor the judgment. 3dly. To receive the spirit of Satan, which is, the knowledge of evil, and, by contrast, of good. The angels and the risen saints know moral good, only as the opposite to evil. They have life in them, and they possess that divine liberty which speaks and acts only in accordance with truth, and which, on this earth, is found in love, in which necessity and liberty are united—love, which imposes a yoke of joy, peace, and truth. Now, Adam, whose soul was passive and receptive, instead of perfecting it by the active principle of the Holy Spirit, received the active principle of the spirit

reach perfection through the way of trial, that he should arrive at it by the way of sin; for we should never think of the fall, except in connexion with redemption, which God foresaw, as well as the result of the temptation. Hence God allowed evil because He could not prevent it without changing the nature of man, and interfering with his advancement towards perfection; but in His infinite love, He provided a remedy before-hand. John iii. 16. We must carefully distinguish this necessary *possibility* of sinning, from a predisposition, or inclination, or tendency to evil. God created man with the former, as we have just seen, but He did not give him the latter. A disposition to sin being in itself the germ of evil, if man had possessed it when he came forth from the hands of his Maker, we should be obliged to trace back the origin of evil to God. Such an idea is blasphemy. But it is not so with the possibility of sinning. What is sin in its most simple expression? It is the desire in a creature to be independent of God, to be a law to himself, to deny the supreme law of his existence by separating himself from God—the source of life and of every good. Now there is but one being to whom that desire is impossible, that is God. God being His own law,

of the world; he was destined to espouse Christ, *the life*, and he united himself to the devil and to death; and this first spiritual adultery was the source of every other evil."—M. de Rougemont.

having in Himself the principle of life, for Him to commit evil, it would be necessary for Him to cease to be Himself, to annihilate Himself. But the creature having a personal, *derived* existence, it is always possible for him to wish to depart from God, and to break the bands which unite him to his Creator. To pretend that God might have created man without this possibility, is to say, that instead of making him a creature, he might have made him a God, or a machine incapable of willing.* But, it will be said, God, at the same time that He permitted the temptation and left His creature free, might have inclined his will, and without forcing it, have caused it to choose the good. This is true; and thus we find ourselves on the verge of the depth already hinted at, and are silent.

But to return. The epithet given to the serpent (עָרוּם) may signify *sagacious, wise*, and be taken in a good sense, or *subtle*, crafty, and be taken in a bad signification. We unhesitatingly adopt, with Calvin, the first meaning; for it cannot have been the intention of the sacred author to indicate any evil intention in the serpent, that animal being nothing more than an instrument. Other commentators have adopted the latter meaning, and

* See on the origin of evil the work of Tholuck already quoted. *Lehre von der Sünde*, p. 15, seq.

have concluded that Moses mentioned the subtlety of the serpent to ascribe the temptation to it, and that in consequence, we cannot consider it as the work of an evil spirit. But if Satan chose an animal for the accomplishment of his design, it was agreeable to his views to employ, as his instrument, a creature known to Eve by the superiority of its instinct, in order that she might the less distrust the suggestions of her enemy. Perhaps also we may admit with Hengstenberg, (Christot. 1. 33.) that "Moses designedly names that quality of the serpent to give to the more sagacious of his readers the solution of the problem of the temptation. The serpent has at all times and among all people, been considered as the emblem of prudence. See Matt. x. 16.

"*And he said unto the woman*," &c. Here a multitude of objections are raised against the literal sense. How can the serpent have *spoken?* How can we suppose him to have had ideas, to have reasoned consecutively? How can we conceive articulate words to have been uttered by an animal without the organs of speech? Hence the different opinions which have been adopted to explain these words are innumerable. I will only mention the principal. To those who see in our chapter nothing more than a figure or fable, there is scarcely any difficulty; this verse is merely one of the details which finds an easy explanation in the whole of the

system. In the opinion of some of these persons, the conversation of Eve with the serpent is to be regarded as a well known oriental figure, by which we ascribe even to inanimate objects, the thoughts which they suggest to us. According to this theory, doubts entered the mind of Eve with regard to the reality of the Divine prohibition, on seeing the serpent eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge without any evil consequences following. And in conformity with the genius of oriental writing, these doubts, accompanied by desires and fears, are merely thrown into the form of a conversation between Eve and the serpent. The first author of this interpretation was Rabbi Abarnabel, whom Clarke, Eichhorn, Dœderlein, Gabler, &c. have followed, and even some writers who admit the reality of the facts of our chapter, as Hahn and many Roman Catholic authors. It is evident that this interpretation banishes from the scene the real tempter, and makes evil emanate from the heart of the woman. For this to have been the case, she must have had a predisposition to evil, an idea which we have already combated. Other authors think that the devil suggested the temptation to the woman without the assistance of articulate words, and that the serpent merely encouraged her by his example, the answers of the woman also being only simple thought unexpressed. We cannot say that

this explanation of the passage is grammatically false; for it is certain that in the Bible, the words *say, speak*, must sometimes be understood of a simple thought unarticulated; as, for example, when they are referred to God, (Gen. i. 26.; vi. 3, 7.) And we ourselves often employ this phrase, *said I*, or *said I to myself*, to express the act of thinking. Besides this interpretation is, in the main, quite conformable to the literal sense in which we understand the temptation. Nevertheless, if we judge of this conversation, which will always be attended with some obscurity, by our present method of conceiving and communicating our ideas, it will be difficult to understand, how all that reasoning of the devil, how the whole of that long promise which he made to the woman: "Ye shall not surely die: God doth know that your eyes shall be opened; ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," could have been communicated without the aid of words. Further, the excuse which the woman gives, ver. 13, and the curse of the serpent, ver. 14, seem to be opposed to this interpretation. The surest and the simplest interpretation is, to admit with Calvin, Grœcher, Hengstenberg, and all the literal commentators, that the devil *spake* by means of the serpent. Our ignorance of the species of serpent here mentioned, removes, or at least greatly weakens the objection drawn from the absence of the organs necessary for

articulation in that animal. Besides we have many instances in the Bible of words being evidently articulated without the assistance of organs known to us. (See meditation on the subject.)*

"Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

David Kimchi supposes that the devil had already suggested to the woman some doubts of the justice of the command of God, some blasphemous insinuations with regard to the state of dependance in which He had placed man, since, coming to the prohibition to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he draws from it a new argument: *And even, how much more,*† is it unjust to forbid you? &c. The answer of the woman is not favourable to this idea. The Chaldee paraphrast translates אַף כִּי by *is it true that?* This sense is agreeable to the opinion of those who see here only a question calculated to inspire doubt. In this case it would, perhaps, be necessary to

* There is, however, in the literal interpretation of Calvin, a false idea which we cannot admit with Hengstenberg: Si incredibile videtur, locutus esse, Deo jubente, bestiis, unde homini sermo, nisi quia ejus linguam Deus formavit? Without any doubt, but can it be said that the serpent spake in the temptation, Deo jubente? The example of Balaam's ass is cited, and here we may admit that it spake, Deo jubente.

† In two other passages where אַף כִּי occurs, it signifies, *how much more.* (1 Sam. xiv. 30; 2 Sam. iv. 11.) In 1 Kings viii. 27, it signifies, *how much less.*

understand, with Gesenius, the interrogative particle, הַאַף כִּי־ is it so? (ist es so dass?) which agrees in the sense with our translation: What! hath God said? This is the most probable signification of the phrase, the import of which is sufficiently difficult to determine. The object of the devil is to shake the woman's faith in the truth of the command which God had given, and perhaps to turn it into ridicule: What! what matters it to God if ye eat? &c. Another interpretation, less conformable to the grammatical sense of אַף כִּי but which seems better to answer the end of the tempter, has been proposed by some ancient commentators: they translate it, "Why hath God said?" In this case, the question would not be whether, in fact, God had given the order or not—the woman could scarcely doubt that—but what was the reason of that order? The question thus proposed is also more insidious than according to the other interpretation. "It is the most dangerous of all temptations," says Calvin, quoting this opinion, which he admits in part, "to insinuate that we ought not to obey God until we first know the reason of His command; the true rule of obedience is, to hold as just and right every thing which God commands, resting satisfied with His simple command." We would not hesitate to admit this sense, if it could

be justified by the grammar. "Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden" (מִכֹּל עֵצ הַגָּן) admits of a double sense in the Hebrew: the phrase may signify, either, ye shall not eat of *all*, you shall except one of them, or, ye shall not eat of *any*. It is probable that the last sense was in the mind of the tempter, who thus intended to aggravate the appearance of severity or injustice which he wished to make Eve see in the command of God. The answer of the woman, *We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden*, seems a refutation of the tempter's exaggeration, and favours our interpretation. אֲכֹל עֵצ *to eat of a tree*, is an elliptical phrase, which is completed in the following verse, *the fruit of the trees*. (— עֵצ פְּרִי)

Ver. 2, 3. "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."

What is "the tree which is in the midst of the garden" called in the preceding chapter, ver. 9? "The tree of the knowledge of good and evil?"— So many answers have been given to this question, that one might almost fill a volume with them, without yet following the example of the learned *Ziegra*, who quotes this verse (ch. ii. 9.) in twenty-

two different languages.* A great diversity of opinion on a passage generally indicates some difficulty in it, and it cannot be denied that this is the case in the present instance. Yet the explication of this verse would have been greatly simplified, if commentators had been content to take it as it is, without adding to it ideas which it does not contain; we speak here only of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; the parallel notion of the *tree of life* will come before us in verse 22. We shall cite different opinions, to give the reader an opportunity of comparing them with that which we have adopted, and of choosing for himself.

What has thrown the greatest difficulty in the way of the meaning which we have assigned to the tree of knowledge, is, that at all times men have sought, in the pretended properties of the tree itself, the reasons for God's prohibiting its enjoyment to man. Hence one opinion widely spread among the German theologians of the last centuries, and known even to Chrysostom, although he did not receive it, is, that the fruit of the tree was poisonous, and that God prohibited it to man with a paternal wisdom, just as a father forbids his child to touch a poisonous beverage. According to this

* Dissertation *on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, in the *Thesaurus theol-philol, sive sylloge dissertationum*, etc.

opinion, Adam having violated the Divine injunction, immediately began to experience in his body the disastrous effects of the poison, in physical evils, sicknesses, and death. But to admit this opinion, about which Knapp* seems not to have the least doubt, we must also admit with him, that sin, the effect of the fall of man is entirely in the flesh.† To cure such an evil it was not the spiritual redemption of Christ that was required, but a physical remedy, a simple antidote.

Another opinion, more natural, but, in our mind, equally without foundation, is, that the fruit of the forbidden tree had the property of exciting carnal and sensual desires. Such is the idea adopted by Meyer, in his excellent notes on the Bible.‡ "The 7th verse," observes M. de Rouge-

* Vorlesungen über die Christliche Glaubenslehre. Halle, 1827. Vol. i. p. 311.

† Ibid, Vol. ii. p. 39.

‡ This, as is well known, is the idea which Milton has clothed with the brilliant colours of poetry:

"As with new wine intoxicated both,
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them breeding wings
Wherewith to scorn the earth. But that false fruit
Far other operation first displayed,
Carnal desire inflaming, he on Eve
Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him
As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn, &c.
Par. Lost, B. IX.

mont, "is very favourable to the hypothesis of Meyer, which Milton, for example, already knew, and which I believe is very ancient. Voluptuousness would, in that case, have been the first sin, and I would without difficulty have adopted this explanation, if it did not appear to me completely contradicted by ch. ii. ver. 24, which intimates the lawfulness of marriage." In rejecting this opinion, it is not denied that a very great change took place, after the fall, in the carnal part of man. His senses and his desires partook of the disorganization, physical and moral, which destroyed the harmony of the whole man with himself and with his God. But with regard to the cause and the nature of the first sin, it appears to us more conformable to the Bible to consider it in a point of view purely moral and spiritual, as we shall shortly show.

Other authors, seeking in the inherent properties of the tree the reason for God's forbidding the enjoyment of it, and wishing to account for its title, *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, have supposed that its fruit was capable of exercising an influence over man's understanding. Thus Josephus (the historian) pretends that the "woman having eaten of the fruit, and liking the effects of it, persuaded Adam also to partake of it; soon after they perceived their nakedness; for it was the nature of this tree to give penetration and discern-

ment." The same idea is found in Josephus of Damas, with this difference, that he supposes that the knowledge of his own nature given to a creature arrived at a high degree of perfection might be useful and beneficial to him, while, to a being still inexperienced and in a state of infancy, it would be useless, and even pernicious. Such was the state of Adam, and such the cause of the divine prohibition.*

It seems to us, that in all these interpretations, (and we pass over many others which might be referred to,) commentators have overlooked too much the real importance of the divine law, which was to place the creature under responsibility, and to afford him means of moral development through obedience. Without repeating here what we have said in our meditation on this subject, with regard to the object of the command, we observe, that Moses does not even mention the pretended property ascribed to the fruit of the tree, of exercising an influence, whether physical or intellectual, upon man; we do not absolutely deny this influence, but it is by no means necessary to account for the prohibition, the whole design of which was moral. What signifies the nature of the tree? Of what consequence is the apparent insignificance of an order,

* V. R. Bellarmin, Lib. de grat. primi hom. c. 17.

which, it is said, relates merely to the enjoyment of, or abstaining from a certain fruit? It is the command of God we are to consider; it is the responsibility of man, his obedience to the word of his Creator, or his contempt of that word.* Many have turned their attention from this important point, to dwell upon causes and secondary motives, and have thus involved the question in difficulties and darkness.

Nor ought the name of the tree to lead us into error with regard to its nature; for though Moses calls it the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, previous to his account of the fall, yet it is evident that it did not receive its name till afterwards, *ab effectu*, as Calvin says. It was, in fact, by the tree that Adam knew good, the command of God, obedience; and by the tree that he knew evil, disobedience. In the way of *experience*, which is the only real knowledge of a thing, Adam knew neither good nor evil previous to his fall; for it was only by contrast that he could judge of them. From that time he knew good in opposition to his present misery, and evil in opposition

* "By one man's *disobedience* many were made sinners." (Rom. v. 19.) This is sin. *Quarè initium ruinæ quâ labefactum est humanum genus, fuit defectio, ab imperio Dei··· Proinde infidelitas radix defectionis fuit, sicut sola fides nos Deo conjungit····Ad hæc scimus non externâ specie æstimari coram Deo peccata, sed interiore effectu.*—CALVIN.

to the good which he had lost.* It is exactly the *curvo posse dignoscere rectum* of the heathen poet, (Hor. Ep. ii. 2.) If you would know the real nature of any sin, examine your conscience and your heart, after you have had the misfortune to commit that sin, bitter regret added to the torment of remorse and the shame of the heart will, at such a moment, also make you sensible of what it is to be *innocent* of that sin. The object of the sin, whatever it be, is to you a tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

We will not say with Tertullian, that the command of God to man contained, in detail, all the commandments subsequently given in the decalogue;† but we will say with Luther (and we cannot refrain from quoting his noble reflections on the subject, the spirit of which he has admirably seized,) that we love to see in it a whole covenant, a whole religion, a whole worship: "*Conditur nova arbor ad discrimen boni et mali, ut haberet Adam certum signum cultus et reverentiæ erga Deum. Nam cùm omnia ei tradita essent, ut iis*

* Arbor illa appellata est scientiæ dignoscendi boni et mali non quia inde talia quasi poma pendebant; sed quidquid esset arborilla, cujuslibet fructus esset, ideo sic vocata est quia homo qui nollet bonum à malo discernere per præceptum discretus erat per experimentum, ut tangendum vetitum inveniret supplicium. Angus in Ps. 73.

† Lib. adv. Jud. c. 2.

pro arbitrio frueratur, seu ad necessitatem, seu voluptatem vellet, requirit tandem Deus ab Adamo ut in hac arbore scientiæ boni et mali reverentiam et obedientiam præstaret ergà Deum, et hoc quasi exercitium cultûs Dei retineret, ne ex eâ quicquam gustaret." And a little further: "*Instituitur igitur hîc ecclesia, antequàm œconomia esset, nam Dominus concionatur hic Adæ et proponit ei verbum.* — *Hæc enim concio, Adæ et omnibus nobis si in innocentiâ perstitisset, fuisset tanquam Biblico, nec opus habuissemus papyro atramento calamis et illa infinita multitudine librorum qua hodiè indigemus; nec tamen millessimam partem ejus sapientiæ consequimur, quam Adam habuit in Paradiso. Totum studium sapientiæ hæc brevis concio absolvisset, ac ostendisset nobis tanquam in tabulâ pietam bonitatem Dei, qui sine illis incommodis naturam hanc creâsset quæ postea per peccatum sunt consecuta. Hæ igitur arbor scientiæ boni et mali,*" adds this great reformer, "*fuisset ecclesia ad quam, cum posteritate suâ, die sabbato convenisset et post refectionem ex arbore vitæ prædicasset Deum et laudasset eum pro tradito dominio omnium creaturarum super terram . . . . . Hunc exterum locum ritum verbum, cultum habuisset homo; postea rediisset ad operationem et custodiam, donec præfinitum*

tempus impletum esset, quo esset translatus in cœlum cum summâ suavitate. Sed loquimur de his bonis tanquam de thesauro perdito et merito suspiramus ad eum diem in quo restituentur omnia. Utile autem est ut hoc quoque consideremus, Deum Adæ verbum, cultum, et religionem dedisse nudissimum, purissimum et simplicissimum, in quâ nihil laboriosum, nihil sumptuosum fuit. Non enim præcepit mactationem taurorum, non fumum thuris, non vota, non Jesuina, non alias afflictiones corporis. Hoc tantùm vult, ut laudet Deum, ut gratias ei agat, ut lætetur in Domino et ei in hoc obediat, ne ex vetitâ arbore commedat." Comment. in Gen. in loco.

Our readers will pardon this long quotation; one is not soon tired of repeating or hearing such words as these; it is impossible to comment on the Bible with more heart, more intelligence, and more spirituality.

It would be easy to make interesting comparisons between these scriptural notions of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tradition, evidently derived from the Bible, by which different nations have endeavoured to explain the origin of evil. But the length of these reflections does not allow us to stop here any longer.

In the third verse, which we are considering, the woman does not report the command of God and its

accompanying sanction, exactly as they had been given her; she adds to the prohibition this clause, "neither shall ye touch it;" and instead of repeating the sanction in all its terrible certainty, "Ye shall surely die," she employs this doubtful form of expression, "lest ye die."* Perhaps we ought to conclude from this, that already her faith in the certainty of the word of God had been shaken by the sneering question of the tempter.

Verse 4. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."

After having insinuated a doubt into the heart of the woman, by a captious question, the tempter now daringly gives the lie to the word of God. "*Jam liberius insultat Satan, et quia ruinam sibi patere videt, recto impetu perrumpit. Neque enim aperto Marte unquam congredi solet, nisi quùm nos sponte nudos illi et inermes exponimus.*"— Calvin. As in the command of God the certainty of the sanction is expressed by the Hebrew idiom; "shalt die the death," or rather "to die; thou shalt die," so the tempter expresses the certainty of his denial by the declaration, "Ye shall not die the death," ye shall not surely die.†

* פֶּן it is true does not always express doubt (Gen. xix. 19.) but it never expresses certainty; it is the *ne, ne fortè* of the Latins. See for the meaning of the same expression "lest ye die." Lev. x. 7.

† This form of expression, so frequent among the Hebrews,

5. "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

The tempter having undermined in the woman's heart, her faith in the word of God, gives her a promise; having taken away fear, he excites hope; having trampled under foot the source of humility, he addresses himself to pride. Some have imagined that they could trace in this appeal of the tempter to the omniscience of God, a faint praise of the Creator's perfections, intended to persuade the woman that God could never have meant to deprive

which our translations do not always take account of, deserves to be particularly attended to. The infinitive placed before a verb, as in Gen. ii. 17, מוֹת תָּמוּת, to die, "thou shalt die," is never without intention; it gives force and energy to the action of the verb. We find this mode of expression repeated twice in 1 Kings ii. 37, יָדֹעַ תֵּדַע כִּי מוֹת תָּמוּת, *to know, know* that *to die thou shalt die,—know certainly that thou shalt surely die.*—Jacob, on seeing the garment of his son Joseph, and wishing to express forcibly his conviction that a beast had devoured him, makes use of this idiom: טָרֹף טֹרַף יוֹסֵף, *to tear, hath torn Joseph.* This phraseology also indicates the continuation or duration of an action, 1 Kings xx. 37, or some delicate shade of thought which could not be expressed otherwise, Gen. xliii. 7; xxxvii. 8. See Gesenius Hebraeische, § 100, p. 198, 8th edit. or Colerier, Jun. Elémens de la Grammaire Hébraïque, p. 226, 2nd edit.

Some rabbinical commentators have pretended that in the passage under consideration, Gen. ii. 17, the double verb indicates the death of the body and of the soul, in case that Adam violated the command of God.

His creature of the benefit of the forbidden fruit. But it is more natural and more in accordance with what goes before, to admit that the tempter wished to inspire the woman with a distrust of the goodness of God, by representing Him as wishing to deprive her of the privilege of knowing good and evil, like the Divinity Himself, out of envy. In this case we may translate it, ye shall be as God (*Elohim* being only a plural of dignity), ye will have the same privileges as Him, *this He knows*, and He wishes it not. The name *Elohim* being sometimes given to angels, and to princes or magistrates, some Jewish commentators (among others, the Targum of Jonathan) have thought that the meaning of the tempter was, "Ye shall be as powerful angels." But these notions, attached at a later period to the word Elohim, were unknown to the woman, and could not have been suggested to her.—"Your eyes shall be opened," the eyes of your mind; "ye shall know good and evil," a phrase which in the style of the ancients frequently signifies, to be wise, knowing, prudent. V. Odyss. xviii. 227, 228, and xx. 309, 310. Such at least was the idea which the devil wished to insinuate; for, in his intention, the accomplishment of this promise was to be fatal to his victims.

Ver. 6. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the

eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

This plain unvarnished recital points out to us three conditions of perfection which the woman was to have sought in God, but which to her were but three kinds of lusts, which she seeks to satisfy out of God and in obeying the devil: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." 1 John ii. 16. I refer to the meditation on ver. 6, for the development of this idea, which is borrowed from Meyer,* and it only remains for me to explain the expressions of the text. The two words תַּאֲוָה and תַּאֲוָי are nearly synonomous; the first formed from אָוָה, to desire, signifies, in a good sense, *desire, wish*, Ps. x. 17, and in a bad, *lust, sinful desire,*

* Eve disobeyed the command of God and fell under the power of Satan; she yielded to a temptation which united the three seductions of sensuality, curiosity, and pride, (1 John ii. 16,) which are found in the temptation of Jesus Christ. But she was seduced, not by evil thoughts which were spontaneously formed in her, but by those which Satan suggested, and to which she gave access in her soul. It is the characteristic feature of the fall, that it came from without. Man did not create evil as Satan had done, (John viii. 44,) but he failed in not rejecting it. This point of view is of great importance in the matter of redemption, which, I think, would not have been possible had man drawn evil out of his own resources, for it comes to destroy the work of the devil, to restore man to his primitive state, and then raise him to a higher degree. M. F. Rougemont.

as ἐπιθυμία, which is employed in two significations; the latter, is the *part* in *Niphal*, of חָמַד *to desire, to seek after;* employed adjectively it signifies *desirable, precious, to be liked.* The one is a desire to *the eyes*, to the sight; beautiful to look upon; the other is desirable לְהַשְׂכִּיל, *to be intelligent, prudent, wise.* This last word is the *infin.* in *Hiph.* of שָׂכַל, *to act prudently, with wisdom, with subtlety*, or to *have understanding*, &c. Eve, induced by these attractions, took of the fruit and gave unto her husband. Thus the history of the fall is exhibited as described by the Apostle, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." James i. 14, 15.

Ver. 7. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons."

Their eyes were opened; the promise of the tempter is fulfilled, but in a manner very different from what they expected. We have already said, and it was scarcely necessary to say it, that it is not the eyes of the body that are here spoken of. In the language of Scripture to have the *eyes opened*, is to know, *to see, to understand.* Thus Luke, speaking of the disciples at Emmaüs, says that

while they were at table with Jesus, "their eyes were opened, and they knew him." Luke xxiv. 31. Thus also David addresses the following prayer to God: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Ps. cxix. 18. The eyes of our first parents *being opened* after their sin, "*they knew that they were naked.*" It is not their bodily nakedness principally that is spoken of, for that they were aware of before, they were not ashamed of it; (ch. ii. 25;) but now they blush and seek to hide it. What change has taken place in them? What have they discovered? The effect of sin. There is in this simple and child-like language, a profound knowledge of the heart and its infirmities, and a most searching insight into the science of the human soul. If on other points in this chapter there is a diversity of opinions among theologians, here there is but one voice among them, all, from the earliest times down to the present day, recognising in these words the effect of sin upon the first man.*

* We will here quote some of their numerous testimonies: "Velatos esse opportuit Hevæ oculos, donec vir deceptus foret, nunc ambo infausti consensûs vinculo pariter constricti, malum suum sentire incipiunt quanquam nondùm seriâ culpæ suæ notitiâ tanguntur. Pudet eos suæ nuditatis; convicti tamen non se humiliant coram Deo; non metuunt ejus judicium ut deceret, imo tergiversari non desinunt..... In summâ, describitur hîc à Mose frigida et semimortua peccati cognitio, qualis ingenita est mentibus hominum, ut reddantur inexcusa-

Adam is despoiled of his innocence and of his glory, he feels the sting of sin and remorse of

biles." *Calvin in loco.*—" Quomodò aperti sunt oculi Protoplastis, nisi per peccato sensum et conscientiæ stimulum ? Quid est quòd se jam viderint turpiter nudos, quibus antea nuditas nullatenùs turpis erat, quam agnoverint se originali justitiâ denudatos ? Cur consuerunt sibi subligacula, nisi quia sentiebant carnem stimulis pravæ libidinis agitari, et legem membrorem lege mentis reluctari ? Et annon illa persuasio quòd ficûs follis crederent fœditatem illam tegi posse, indicium est deperditæ primævæ sapientiæ, contractæ cœcitatis stupendæ ?" Calov. Comment. in loco.—" Aperti sunt oculi amborum. Quomodò inquit nisi ad invicem concupiscendum ad peccati penam carnis ipsius morte conceptam, ut jam esset corpus mortis in quo lex membrorum repugnaret legi mentis ? Neque enim clausis oculis facti erant." Augustin de Gen. ad literam. l. 11, cap. 31.—" Aperti sunt oculi amborum, non ad videndum, nam et antea videbant ; sed ad discernendum inter bonum quod amiserunt et malum in quod eciderant. . . . . Experta enim morbi molestiâ evidentior fit etiam jucunditas sanitatis cognoverunt ergo quia nudi erant, nudi scilicet eâ gratiâ, qua fiebat ut nuditas corporis, nulla eos lege peccato menti eorum repugnante, confunderet. Hoc itaque cognoverunt quod felicius ignorarent, si Deo credentes et obedientes non committerent, quod eos cogeret experiri, infidelitas et inobedientia quod nocerent." Id. de Civit. Dei l. 14. cap. 17. " Habet autem arbor nomen scientiæ boni et mali, sicut Augustin dicit, quia postquam in eâ peccavit Adam, non solum vidit et expertus est quid boni amiserit, sed etiam in quantam miseriam per inobedientiam suam confectus est." Luther Comment. in Gen.—" Their eyes were opened to see that they had been deceived by the serpent, that they had broken the commandment of God, incurred the displeasure of their Creator and kind benefactor, and had brought ruin and destruction upon themselves." Gill's Exposition of the Old

conscience, without being humbled. And where is the man who, after he has fallen into sin, does not feel all that Adam felt, where is the man, who, if he consults his own conscience and his own heart in such circumstances, does not feel the shame of his nakedness, and experience the impulse, foolish indeed but natural, of striving, like Adam, to cover himself with fig-leaves? The manifestation of this feeling, so deep and bitter, may not always be the same, it may assume different forms, excite different kinds of grief; but it always exists, because there is a just God in heaven, and it will be to sinners an element of eternal misery. In Adam this feeling manifests itself by a sense of shame, perhaps, as Calvin observes, because not

Testament.—"Satan's promise soon began to be accomplished; the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened to see the snare when they were already caught in it; they saw also misery before them, with horror and dismay, and their new discoveries were their torment." Scott's Comment.—"Now, when it was too late, they saw the folly of eating the forbidden fruit. They saw the happiness they had fallen from, and the misery they were fallen into. They saw a loving God provoked, his grace and favour forfeited, his likeness and image lost. They saw their nature corrupted and depraved, and felt a disorder in their own spirits which they had never before been conscious of." Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments.

Thus speak pious and enlightened men of all ages, and we might quote many others, especially among the fathers of the Church. See Chrysostom. Hom. xv. in Gen. Theodoret Quæs. 44. in Gen. &c.

knowing the depth of his moral misery, he as yet feels it only *in libidine venereâ*. It was thus his corruption first discovered itself to him; the senses and matter usurped the empire which belonged to the spirit; harmony was broken; the image of God disfigured and defiled.

Ver. 8—10. "And they heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

There is in the whole conduct of Adam after his fall, a kind of infatuated childishness, which can only be explained by the confusion which he was thrown into from a consciousness of his crime, a feeling most calculated to weaken the voice even of plain common sense. This is nothing more than what we see every day in criminals who, after having displayed all the resources of a sagacious and daring spirit in the commission of their crimes, often betray themselves by the most silly actions which you would scarcely expect from a child. Such Adam appears to us, covering himself with an apron of fig-leaves, and hiding himself among the trees of the garden. Some have concluded from his acting in this manner, that he must still have been in a state of infancy, and

without the knowledge of the perfections of God. This is wrong; the trouble of conscience, the fear and trembling which had taken possession of him, are sufficient to account for his conduct.— Besides, his hiding himself among the trees of the garden will appear quite natural, if we admit that here the *voice of the Lord* (קוֹל יְהוָה) signifies, as in some other passages, *the thunder*, (Ps. xxix. 3. seq. Ps. lxxvi. 18;) and if instead of rendering לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם by the wind of the day (that is the breeze of the morning or evening; *Eng. Vers.* the cool of the day,) we understand by it, as some interpreters have proposed, an impetuous wind of that day, the first storm that shook nature, and received a commission to express the displeasure of the Deity.

Meanwhile the Lord appears to Adam, speaks to him, calls him to judgment. In what manner, under what form, by means of what language the sacred historian does not tell us, and it is impossible for us to know. But this fact will not have the least difficulty to any one who knows and believes the subsequent revelations of God to man. Who was it that appeared to the patriarchs in their tents? Who was it that *spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend?* Who was it that said to him, "*Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, the Lord God of your fathers hath appeared unto me?*" And when, on Mount

Horeb the great legislator of Israel said unto the Lord: "When they shall say unto me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?" who was it that answered him, "I am that I am? Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you."—As our Lord hath declared that no man hath *seen God at any time, or heard His voice*, and yet the being that appeared to men under the Old Testament dispensation is called God, Jehovah, we must conclude that at all times, and even in Eden, the *Revealer* of God has ever been the same, viz. the Eternal Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God.* This scriptural view of the subject makes every thing clear and easy, not only in the account of the transactions in Eden, but also throughout the whole Old Testament. This view also is far from being new; it is that of the first Christians, of most modern theologians, and even of Jewish commentators, the *Targum of Onkelos*, and that of *Jonathan* paraphrasing the 8th verse, thus: "They heard the voice of the WORD of the Lord," and it is well kown that by the *Word* they understand God revealed, the Messiah. For example, in Ps. cx. instead of the words "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou at my right hand;" they translate

* See notes on ver. 1. in the commencement, and the commentaries there referred to.

it, "The Lord said unto the Word." If then the Lord communicated with Adam, as with Abraham, Moses, and the prophets, in a visible manner and under a human form, what is there extraordinary in the communication of God in Eden, and especially in that expression, "the voice of the Lord walking in the garden," an expression which ignorance has often made the object of a pitiful ridicule?—But again, the participle מִתְהַלֵּךְ, *walking, moving*, may refer to קוֹל *voice*, as well as to the *Lord*, and if we admit that קוֹל means the noise of the thunder, then this expression will simply intimate the repetition of the echo. I do not pretend to justify this interpretation; and only submit it to the consideration of the attentive reader of the Bible.

Ver. 11—13. "And He said, who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, the woman that Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

Adam had said, that he was afraid, because he was naked; the first question of his Judge is intended to convince him that he trembles, not because he is naked, but because he is a sinner. That question signifies—what makes thee blush *now*

on account of thy nakedness, of which lately thou wast not ashamed? The first fault in Eden is followed by a lie, intended to cover it, (and who has not realized in his life this sad history;) to unmask the sinner, then, it is necessary to unmask the liar; and such is the object of the first question. To deepen conviction in the heart of the sinner, the Lord names to him and points out the object of the divine command and of his disobedience: *the tree;* to bring under his view the responsibility and the greatness of his crime, the Lord reminds him of His command; I *commanded thee;* in fine, to lead him to confess his sin, the Lord addresses to him a second question calculated to enhance the weight of his crime. Who has not heard in his heart this interrogatory, when looking at the object of his sin, calling to mind the law which he has violated, and listening to the questions of conscience? (See for the different lessons suggested by this question, the *meditation* on this verse.) צִוָּה to *order, command, charge,* does not occur any where else, that I am aware of, in the negative sense of *to forbid, prohibit.* But this verb also signifies to *establish, ordain, decree.* Ps. lxviii. 29; cxi. 9. Such may be the meaning of the word here, though negative. The Lord had established this order, this covenant which man broke. There is more scope and energy in this acceptation of it.

Instead of taking to himself the blame of his sin, Adam throws it upon his wife, and she upon the serpent. This circumstance also discloses a mysterious corner in the heart of man. (See Meditation.) There is a peculiar force in the Hebrew phrase, which Adam employs, in order to exculpate himself by accusing his wife. "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, עִמָּדִי *she* gave me," &c. עִמָּדִי, *with me*, or "to be with me," determines the meaning of the word עִמָּהּ *with her*, ver. 6, from which some have concluded that Adam was present with Eve from the commencement of the temptation; both the words intimate their matrimonial union, and not their immediate proximity to one another. The Lord's words to the woman are rather an exclamation: *How hast thou done such a thing!* than an interrogation: *Why hast thou done this?* מַה has both significations. *Phrasis Hebraea plus habet vehementiæ: est enim oratio mirantis, ut in re prodigiosa. Vertendum, itaque potius: Quomodò fecisti hoc? Ac se diwisset: qui fieri potuit ut in animum induceres, viro tuo tam perversa esse consultrix?* Calvin.

Ver. 14. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."

I have already answered the question which naturally arises here, viz.—Why does God punish the blind and innocent instrument of sin? (See Med. on ver. 14, 15.) It was, in two words, to inspire the first man with a horror of his crime, and also to punish him by causing him to find an enemy in a creature which, like all the others, was made for his enjoyment. Now what does the first part of the malediction, pronounced against the serpent, import? First, that he was to be made an object of horror, not only to man, but to all nature. The whole creation, all the animals have partaken of the curse and disorganization which sin has brought upon the earth. (See Rom. viii. 20, 21, and ver. 17—19 of our chapter;) but the serpent is cursed in a special manner; he finds an enemy in every living being, and in his kind of life bears a distinctive mark of the malediction. Perhaps the expressions of the text אָרוּר אַתָּה מִכֹּל (cursed art thou among, &c.) ought to be considered as a superlative, and rendered *most cursed among, &c.* At least, it is exactly the same turn of expression as that of ver. 1. *The serpent was more subtle than any beast, &c.* In the second place, the serpent is condemned to *walk or go upon his belly.* Here the opinions of commentators are divided, some concluding, from these words, that a change has taken place in the conformation of this animal,

and that before the fall it moved erect, and by means of feet. Thus think the greater part of the Jewish commentators, many ancient theologians, among others, Luther, and among moderns, Hengstenberg, many English commentators, &c.; others, as Calvin, in this malediction, merely see God reducing this animal to its primitive abject state, from which it had risen up, in becoming the instrument of the temptation;* others, again, think that the serpent, without being endowed with feet, moved with the fore part erect, like the basilisk, a species of lizard, in India. It is certain that, if we merely consider the text, this clause of the curse would seem to favour the first of these opinions more than either of the two others. That the serpent should be supposed to have had feet, has nothing in it absurd or contrary to natural history. Pliny, in his *Hist. Nat.* l. ii. c. 47, mentions a species of these animals, which moved with head erect, and on two feet. We also find in the ancient

* The following are Calvin's words: Cæterum nihil erit absurdi si fateamur pristinæ conditioni iterum addici serpentem, cui naturaliter jam subjectus erat. Sic enim congendus erat in ordinem qui se adversùs Dei imaginem extulerat. Ac si dictum esset: tu ausus es se miserum et putidum animal, in hominem insurgere quem præficeretur totius mundi dominio! Quasi versituum esset, quum terræ esses affixus in cœlum penetrare. Ergò undè emergere tentasto jam te detraho, ut sorte tuâ contentus esse dicas nec amplius insolescas in hominis contumeliam.

poets, Ovid (*Metam.* l. iii. v. 43,) and Virgil (*Georg.*) passages in which the serpents are described as moving *sublato pectore*, or *erectus in auras*. "I have established a curious fact," writes Mr. de Rougemont, "relative to the serpent, and the curse pronounced upon it. Geology has found in the formations anterior to the last, a great number of reptiles of the family of the tortoise or crab, that of the lizard, and that of the batrachides, but not one of the family of the *ophis* (serpent,) which consequently did not exist before man. Now the tortoise, the ichthyosauris, the plesiosauris, the crocodile, and the salamander, are all reptiles with feet; not one of them creeps upon the earth, and eats dust, as the serpent does in the present day. On the other hand, the absence or presence of feet is not an important characteristic of this class of reptiles; one, of the lizard tribe, (the orvet,) has no feet, and the boa, which has the rudiments of feet, near the tail, is of the family of the ophis, or serpent. Thus, if you suppose that the serpent was created originally with feet, like all other vertebral animals, no other family of which is deprived of special locomotive organs, and that from the curse denounced against it, it assumed its present form, geology and natural history, far from having any right to contest the truth of your theory, will support it in an indirect manner; the first, by showing

the non-existence of the serpent in the creations anterior to that of man; the second, in pointing out the anomaly of a family of the *vertebrata*, without locomotive members, and in finding in one of its species, that of the boa, traces of a time when the other species also had feet. Finally, as to the third clause of the curse, *dust shalt thou eat*, &c. we may say, that it is only a consequence of the preceding. If, indeed, we admit that there was a change in the conformation of the serpent, this would appear to me an argument in favour of the hypothesis which we have been just discussing. The serpent, in fact, does not feed upon dust only, or even principally, how then has the curse been accomplished? First, in that the serpent, since his new conformation, moving with greater difficulty, is often constrained, for want of other food, to eat dust or earth; and, next, creeping in the dust, it is impossible for him to separate it from his food, with which it is always mixed. In a word, to creep and to eat dust are two distinctive marks of an abject state, to which, from the beauty of his forms and colours, the serpent would not appear to have been originally destined."

Ver. 15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

So far as this verse relates to the serpent, it indi-

cates, as the terms imply, that mortal and perpetual hatred which exists between human nature and the serpent species. At the sight of a serpent we generally feel a shivering of horror, even when it is beyond the power of hurting us.* This enmity is universal, and in many nations has passed into a proverb. Some ancient naturalists pretend that the serpent cannot endure the sight of a man naked. It is well known, that the only way of killing a serpent is to crush its head, and that a remarkable instinct leads this animal to take singular precautions to preserve that part of its body, as for instance, that of lying in spiral folds, so as to conceal its head amid its numerous circles. On the other hand, the manner in which the serpent moves does not allow it to attack man above the foot or heel, which explains the last words of this verse.†

* Fit enim arcano naturæ sensu, ut ab ipsis abhorreat homo. Quod quibusdem sunt in deliciis, inter prodigia reputatum est; ac quotus horrorem ineutit serpentem aspectus, renovatur defectionis nostra memoria. Calvin.

† The verb שׁוּף which our version renders *bruise*, ought to be translated by the same word in the two members of the phrase, and not as in the Vulgate, once by *conteret*, and the other time by *insidiaberis*, or as Luther, *Zertreten,—stechen*. Calvin translates it in both places by *vulnerare*. Hengstenberg, after Gabler, John, and others, adopts the sense of the German word *treffen, to reach, attack*. This sense has in support of it, that it is in accordance with the two other places in which alone this verb occurs in the Old Testament. Job iv. 17. Ps. cxxxix. 11. Storr endeavours to prove that this verb

Now, after having referred all that precedes to the serpent, we ask ourselves, whether this curse, in striking the instrument of the temptation, must not especially fall upon the real author of evil, the devil? And since it is established by undeniable testimonies of Scripture, that the spirit of darkness was the agent in the seduction, though Moses does not mention him, must we not expect to see him participating in the punishment of sin? The divine oracle promises our first parents the victory over the instrument of their fall, which must have been to them the representative of evil; now it seems evident, that the promise must include the triumph of the seed of the woman over evil itself, and over him who was the author of it. Perhaps, also, the promise was made more explicitly to them than we find it here; however that may be, the greater number of Jewish commentators have understood it thus, saying expressly, that a remedy to be applied to the wounds inflicted by the serpent, would be provided "in the days of king Messiah." (Targ. of *Jonathan* and that of Jerusalem.) Almost all christian theologians also have seen in this passage, a promise of the reparation of the effects of sin by Messiah. To this it is objected, that if the devil has established

generally signifies to approach an object with an hostile intention, (Opusc. Acad. xi. p. 418, 1797;) and Dr. J. P. Smith, in his celebrated work on the Messiah, adopts this opinion. Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1829, second edition.

upon earth a kingdom of darkness which includes his seed, that is, those whose spiritual *father* he is, (John viii. 44.) the ungodly,* we can scarcely understand a single individual, the Messiah, to be intended by *the seed of the woman*. And it is wrong to do so. The profound Calvin was of opinion that we ought not to restrict to an individual the word *seed*, (זֶרַע.) "I understand by seed," he says, "generally *posterity;* but as experience teaches us that the children of Adam are far from having shown that they were capable, of themselves, of overcoming the devil, we must ascend to their *head* or chief, in order to see to whom the victory properly pertains." Thus Paul leads us from the seed of Abraham to Christ. Such then, in my opinion, is the meaning of the passage; the human race, which Satan has endeavoured to reduce under his dominion, are yet to be victorious; but we must attend to the *means* of conquering which the Scriptures point out to us. Satan has for ages led the children of men captive by means of their passions, and he still continues his proud triumph; therefore he is called the prince of this world. But as one more mighty than he (John xii. 31.) has come down from heaven to subdue him, the whole church under

* They are called in Scripture γεννήματα ἐχίδνων. Matt. iii. 7, *generation of vipers;* τέκνα διαβόλου, 1 John iii. 10. Children of the devil.

the conduct of its Chief may, in its turn, triumph over him with contempt. It is to this that St. Paul alludes when he says: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Rom. xvi. 20. (*Comment. in Gen. in h. loco.*)

According to this interpretation, which Hengstenberg adopts, the words (*it, the seed, shall attack thy head, thou shalt attack his heel,*) which, applied to the serpent, may be taken literally, in their figurative sense, when applied to the devil signify, "It is true, that thou hast inflicted a deep wound upon the woman, and thy children shall continue to attack her posterity, yet, notwithstanding thy pleasure in doing evil, thou and thy kingdom shall not be able to inflict an incurable wound upon the human race; while the seed of the woman shall one day triumph over thee, and make thee sensible of thy weakness."* (See Hengstenberg. Christol. I. 42.) It is not, then, without reason, that the church has given the name of *Protovangelium* (first gospel or glad tidings) to this promise, so consoling and so glorious; though at the same time obscure, because it is but the dawn of the great day of the revelation of salvation; *first gospel*, first glad tidings.

Though we have already dwelt a considerable

* This view of the subject is also that of the celebrated Herder. *Briefe das Stud. der Theol. betreffend.* II. s. 233. Tubingen, 1808.

time on these two verses, yet we cannot pass on without noticing, as one of the most singular aberrations of the human mind in the way of criticism, the polemic obstinacy of the Roman Catholics, in maintaining the reading of their Vulgate, ILLA *conteret*, *she* shall bruise, &c.; pretending that instead of הוּא *he*, the pronoun masculine, which evidently refers to זֶרַע *seed*, it ought to be הִיא *she*, the pronoun feminine, referring to the *woman*. And why, it will be asked, attach so much importance to that little word? Those who are not initiated in the secret of this great principle, the dogmatic interest to which they sacrifice every thing, even truth itself, must be informed that, if this point be once admitted, they have the pronoun *she*, referring to the woman; and then it is the woman that is to bruise the serpent's head, to accomplish the work of redemption; and who is this woman but the Virgin Mary? But to maintain this position, it is necessary to cut through difficulties, of which the following are some. 1st. The Hebrew text as we have it, that is, with הוּא *he*, masculine, referring to *seed*, is supported by all the manuscripts. 2dly. Though the reading in question was introduced into the Vulgate so early as the time of Augustine, it never was universally received. 3dly. The *Latin* version, cited by Cyprian, (Adver. Jud. l. xi. c. 8.) has *ipse*, *he*, rendering הוּא literally, which it refers to the Mes-

siah, rather than to the word *seed*. 4thly. The Greek version of the LXX. has αὐτὸς, *he*. 5thly. Jerome himself, to whom the Roman Catholics attribute the *Vulgate* translation, quoting our verse in his *Quæst. hebr. in Gen.* says, IPSE *conteret caput, he will bruise*, &c. 6thly. The Samaritan Hebrew text has the *masculine pronoun*. 7thly. All the Rabbinical commentators have the same pronoun. 8thly. The *Masoretes*, in placing the masculine points to the word, do not even mention, as a various reading, the feminine pronoun. 9thly. The Syriac and Arabic versions have the *masculine pronoun*. 10thly. Besides the two fathers of the church already quoted, Jerome and Cyprian, others, as Ireneus, Chrysostom, Pope Leo the First, and many of his successors, cite our verse as we have it. 11thly. The intrinsic evidence in favour of it is unanswerable; if the pronoun were feminine, the verb and the rest of the phrase would also have had a feminine form to agree with it; the sentence would have been תְּשׁוּפֶנָּה instead of יְשׁוּפְךָ; and the termination of the second verb would likewise have been *feminine*. Indeed, to contend against such evidence, and to adopt a different reading without the least shadow of ground for it, they must be in great need of a verse for the Virgin.

Ver. 16. "And unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in

sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

The woman having sinned first, is first condemned to the temporal and physical evils which are a visible consequence of the fall. The translation, I will *multiply* thy sorrows, gives a false idea of the text; to *multiply* any thing, supposes that it already exists, and that there is only an addition made to it. But the verb רָבָה *to be great*, signifies in its form *hiphil*, to make or render great, without necessarily implying the previous existence of the thing in question. In fact, woman was originally intended to bring forth children without pain, since the pains of childbirth are the effect of a condemnation. And here the analogy of nature is entirely in favour of this truth. The most ancient naturalists have remarked, that none of the lower animals are subjected to pains, in the production of their young, which can at all be compared to those of woman; (Arist. Hist. Animal. l. vii. c. 9.) a great change then must have taken place in the human body. Here, again, we find the Hebrew turn of phrase in the repetition of the verb, *multiplying and will multiply;* (see remarks on ver. 4.) which not only expresses the number and intensity of the pains, but also the certainty of the condemnation. *Thy sorrows and thy conception* (עִצְּבוֹנֵךְ וְהֵרֹנֵךְ) signify the sufferings of preg-

nancy, here named as distinct from the pains of childbirth.* The third clause of this condemnation places the woman in subjection to her husband, תְּשׁוּקָה from שׁוּק *to desire* signifies *desires* in general, which, as motives of action, demand liberty to be satisfied, and which intimate a state of servitude, when they must be referred *to some other person* than the person who forms them.

Ver. 17—19. "And unto Adam He said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

After having assigned to man the reasons for the sentence which He is about to pronounce, the Lord strikes him in his abode; the earth is cursed, and from that malediction result all the clauses of this

* *Quum dicit: multiplicabo dolores, complectitur quidquid molestiæ sustinent mulieres, ex quo gravidæ esse incipiunt, fastidium cibi, deliquia, lassitudines, aliaque innumera, usque ventum est ad partum, qui acerbissima tormenta secum affert.* Calvin.

condemnation which refer directly to man; painful labour, sorrow, &c. God, when He had created the earth, *blessed it;* that is, made it *fruitful,* and "God saw that it was good." Now He pronounces upon it a curse to the opposite effect; the earth shall produce thorns and thistles, shall be barren, at least, unless it be tilled by man in the sweat of his brow. The hard labour to which man is condemned, is thus put in opposition to the pleasing occupations which were assigned him in Eden, cultivating and keeping the garden. Chap. ii. 15. Notwithstanding the labours of man, an immense proportion of the globe is covered with *thorns and thistles.* These desert places so completely bear the mark of the curse, that the Jews considered them as bearing an analogy in the physical, to evil in the moral world. They imagined, from this supposed correspondence, that arid deserts were the abode of evil spirits;* and our Lord seems to sanction this idea, or at least He connects with what is true in it, a very instructive parable, Matt. xii. 43. et seq.† The other clauses of this condemnation have been developed in

* Tobit viii. 3. Bar. iv. 35. And in the inspired books the desert is frequently spoken of as the abode of the most hateful beings in nature, and even of demons. Isa. xiii. 21. xxxiv. 14. Apoc. xvii. 2. To *reduce to a desert,* always expresses a curse.

† See *Oldshausen,* Bib. Comm. i. 412.

the meditation upon these verses; but there is one, the last and most terrible, on which it remains for us to say a word: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." That temporal death is here denounced as a punishment of sin, no one who submits to the authority of the Word of God can question. This doctrine is clearly taught by St. Paul, Rom. v. 12; vi. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 22. All the speculations of men cannot prevail to shake a truth expressed in such plain terms as the following: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." This belief was popular among the Jews; the writings of their paraphrasts and talmudists are full of it, so that the Jews, of the Apostle's time, could have had no doubt as to his meaning. The apocryphal books also contain this doctrine. Wisd. xi. 23, 24. Eccles. xxv. 32. The orthodox fathers of the church are unanimous on the same point. Besides, any one who examines the words of our Lord, must be convinced that God, being the source of life, if man had continued united to Him, he would never have tasted death, which is a disorganization of the work of God, an accident, a power of destruction foreign to the primitive nature of man. Where God and His Spirit are, there is life; but separation from God is death in every sense of the word, I mean death temporal and death spiritual. In fact, God here reminds man that he was taken

out of the earth, in order to make him comprehend this truth: "I took thee out of the vile dust, I formed thee a glorious body, a living soul adorned with Mine image; thou wast united to Me, thou didst draw life from its source. But now thou hast lost Mine image; thou hast broken the bonds which united thee to Me; since thou hast become defiled, My Spirit has withdrawn from thee, '*thou art now but dust, and unto dust thou shalt return!*'" The shudder which we feel when we behold death, repeats to us the malediction of God, and it is impossible not to see in the livid brow and in the decomposed features the seal of sin.

Various objections indeed are made to this doctrine; "It is the nature of matter, it is said, to be dissoluble, and consequently perishable."—Yes, no doubt, if the body of man in his primitive state was such as it is now. But if we cannot conceive of a body indissoluble and eternal, how shall we believe in the state of the body after the resurrection and in life eternal? Again it is objected, "If man was not mortal, how could the earth have contained its inhabitants, since a single generation of mankind is sufficient to people it?" First, we know not what were the primitive designs of God in this respect; and besides, an answer has been given to this question, which, though hypothetic, appears to us sufficiently plausible, viz. that man would have passed

without the separation of his soul from his body into the highest state of perfection, which we call *heaven*.

All these penalties of sin here denounced against Adam are temporal, and such is the sad heritage which we have received from him. We see, in the present state of man, the rigorous execution of all the clause of his condemnation. As to the spiritual and eternal punishment of sin, it comes not to us by Adam, nor *in* Adam, nor on account of Adam, but for our own personal sins. Rom. v. 12. For though we are born in the state in which Adam was after the fall, separated from God, inclined to evil; though we also bear the temporal punishment of his sin, we have, like him, the remedy along with the evil, redemption with the fall, Calvary with Eden, which has been closed against us.

Ver. 20. "And Adam called the name of his wife Eve; because she was the mother of all living."

Some interpreters are of opinion that ותקרא should be rendered by the plu-perfect, *had called*, (before his fall) and that he gave her the name of *mother of all* living before the fatal word *death* had reached his ears. But this is a mistake; for Adam had then called his wife *Ischah*, woman. And the whole narrative shows that the new name which he gave her, was the effect of an impulse of gratitude

and joy because their life was spared. Calvin already mentions this idea. There is also a difference of opinion as to whom the words "*for she has been or shall be the mother*," &c. are to be ascribed. Some maintain that the words were pronounced by Adam when he gave his wife her new name, and in this case they must be translated, *for or because she shall be*, &c. Others regard them as a reflection of Moses, explaining why Adam gave this name to his wife, and then they should be rendered, *she* was, or was to be the mother, &c. We prefer the first sense, as being more in accordance with other examples which we find in Scripture, of names thus changed under remarkable circumstances, and explained by those who gave them.

Ver. 22. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

It is almost unnecessary to say that these words, *did the Lord God make*, signify that He indicated to Adam and his wife the means of clothing themselves, and hiding the shame of their nakedness. We have endeavoured to lay open a deeper meaning of these words. (See Meditation upon this verse.)

Ver. 23. "And the Lord God said, behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live for ever . . . There-

fore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

We will not here repeat the exposition of the three different methods of explaining ver. 22, (see Meditation.) The opinion so generally admitted, that the words "Behold the man is become as one of us," &c. are an irony by which God seeks to humble man, by reminding him of his folly and proud ambition, appears to us incorrect; not only because the moment when the words, which it is attempted thus to interpret, were uttered, was too serious and too terrible to admit of such an irony, but also, because this interpretation is unsupported by the grammar. In fact, in the *Hebrew*, it is not *knowing good and evil*, but *to know good and evil, in order to know*, or destined *to know*, לדעת. The second of these interpretations, that of Meyer, is so ingenious, so beautiful, it shows so much goodness and depth in the designs of the Lord's mercy, it so well accords with the language of the text, and with what follows, (God preventing man from living for ever upon the earth, after having reserved for him so glorious a destiny,) that we would have adopted it without hesitation, were it not that it seemed to present, I would say, too much of the Gospel, too much light upon the destiny of man under the new covenant. The fourth interpretation, which we have embraced because it appeared to us the most

natural, and simple, consists in translating literally these words, "*Behold! man was as one of us, to know*," or *destined to know good and evil*, by obedience and moral improvement, a destination which he has so miserably anticipated. *Now then lest he stretch forth his hand*, &c. (then follows his exclusion from the tree of life, and from the garden of Eden.) This interpretation has the grammar and the whole of the text in its favour, and presents itself naturally to the mind on reading the original. After having admitted it with some hesitation, I found it in the Commentaries of Dr. Gill, whose opinion has confirmed my own.

For the difficulties which some have found in the words, *one of us*, see what has been said on ch. i. 26, upon the plural verb and pronoun, "*let us* make man in *our* image."

This is the place to say a word on the subject of *the tree of life*. Knapp (Glaubenslehre i. 31,) and many other theologians are of opinion, that the tree of life possessed the property of maintaining in man health and life, which were not in him as an essential property of his nature, but were a gift of God, to be preserved by means of this tree. We have already seen that they also supposed, and probably incorrectly, that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had an opposite property, that of injuring

the health and producing death. The Jews also seem to have entertained this opinion, touching the tree of life, at least it has so been concluded, from the fact of their calling medicinal plants by the name of *the tree of life* or *of health*. But we do not see in the account of Moses, nor in any other passages of Scripture which speak of the *tree of life*, the least foundation for the idea, (otherwise so unreasonable, and so little in accordance with the spirit of revelation and of God's dealings with mankind,) that a tree possessed in itself the property of maintaining in man an immortality which he possessed solely in virtue of his union with God. I am aware that an argument has been sought in favour of this opinion in ver. 22,—"Lest he take of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever;" as if man, notwithstanding his separation from God, might, by eating of the tree of life, have lived for ever, in spite of the sentence which condemned him to death. But (not to mention that such a supposition is an insult to the power of God, as if He could not take away from the tree its property as well as from man his immortality), we shall presently see that the words have no such meaning. We admit, then, that the tree was a real one, visible and accessible to man, but purely and simply *symbolical*, that is to say, God gave it to man, not as a *means* of life,

but as a visible *sign* or pledge of the immortality with which he was endowed, and which he was to draw from Him.* This then was the object of the symbol; "God willed that every time man should taste the fruit of that tree, he should be reminded from whom he held his life; that he should remember that he did not live by any virtue of his own, but by the favour of God, by a benefit which was not *in himself, (intrinsicum bonum,)* but which he owed every day to God alone. In a word, this tree was a living witness of the truth, that in God *we live, move, and have our being.*"—*Calvin.* Hence we can draw a comparison between the end and signification of the tree of life, and the end and signification of the Lord's supper. Both were intended as symbols, signs, sure pledges of spiritual life, (provided he who enjoys them be united to the source of life,) but to the man who is estranged from God, they are nothing. We may then, without adopting too forced a system of allegory, admit with some fathers of the church, that the tree of life was a symbol of

* This opinion is supported by the traditions of divers nations, evidently borrowed from the Mosaic account which we are considering, as *the tree of wisdom* among the Indians; *the root of immortality* in the religion of Thibet; *the source of life* among the Persians; so many denominations of the same thing, in which, doubtless, these nations only saw a symbol.

life in Christ; for we should remember that John says of the Word, which was in the beginning with God, and which was God, "*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*"

Now it remains for us to see whether the signification, which we give to the tree of life, agrees with what is said of it in other parts of the Bible where it is mentioned.—Prov. iii. 18. It is said that "wisdom is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her; and happy is every one that retaineth her." "It is what the tree of life was to man in innocency," says Martin in one of his notes. And if we identify the *wisdom by which God founded the earth*, ver. 19, with the *Word* by *which all things were made*, John i. 3, and with the *Son, by whom God made the worlds*, Heb. i. 2,* with what truth and beauty will the idea of the fathers, which I have just mentioned, be invested! Wisdom then is the thing here signified by the tree of life, according to our interpretation. Prov. xiii. 12, and xv. 4. The tree of life signifies simply a thing agreeable or salutary, according to the Jews, who, as we have already seen, thus called medicinal plants, calculated to benefit the health. These two passages have but an indirect

* The identity of *wisdom* in Prov. with the word (λόγος) in Saint John is fully established by Olshausen and Tholuck.—See their Comm. on John i. 1.

reference to the subject under our consideration. In Apoc. ii. 7, xxii. 2, the tree of life is spoken of in a manner evidently symbolical. The first speaks of *the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God*, (comp. Gen. ii. 9,) and the enjoyment of that tree, that is the recovery of the prerogatives of man in innocency, is promised *to him* that *overcometh*. Now here the thing intended cannot be material fruits, which have falsely been supposed to contain in them a virtue of communicating life, but that which the symbol signified. We may draw the same inference from Apoc. xxii. 2, where the spiritual paradise is represented as the abode of the redeemed, instead of Eden, which is closed against them. *The tree of life, bearing its fruit, and yielding its fruit every month*, is evidently a symbol of eternal life, ever fresh and new, of which God is the source as He was to have been in Eden.

But the moment man is separated from the source of life, God takes away from him the symbol, to prevent him from cherishing vain hopes, contrary to the sentence which condemns him. The words of ver. 22, "Now lest he stretch forth his hand," &c. do not mean that man would have continued to live if he had access to the tree of life: he had lost the thing itself, of what use then was the sign? He no

longer possessed the reality, what then availed the symbol ?*

To put man out of the garden was, on the part of God, to exclude him from His presence, from his primitive mode of existence, and to reduce him to the state in which he now is, conformably to the curse denounced against him. No being, destitute of holiness and of the divine life, can dwell in His presence.

Ver. 24. "So He drove out the man: And He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

The moral import of this passage is, doubtless, that God wished to teach man that there was no longer any hope for him to be admitted into his former abode, and into the enjoyment of his primitive prerogatives. The Lord placed under his eyes a visible witness of his fall, and of the Divine justice, which shuts out the sinner from communion with God, so long as he is not reconciled to Him, as the flaming sword excluded him from access to the tree of life.—But as to the *historical* meaning

† Certum quidem est non potuisse hominem, *etiamsi totam arborem vorasset*, vitâ frui, Deo invito .... Neque enim fuit unquam in arbore vis aliqua intrinsica; sed quatenùs illius usu gratiam suam homini obsequaverat vivificam facit.—Calvin.

of the passage I confess my ignorance. The Bible does not explain it; and as for man, "as many men, so many opinions." From those who believe the flaming sword to be the *Torrid Zone*, where they place Eden, to those who see in it the fire of purgatory, the space is great, and yet it is filled with different speculations.—It is generally agreed that by the cherubim, we are to understand angels, to whom God committed the charge of Eden. But on what foundation? All the passages of Scripture, where mention is made of these mysterious beings, are more or less obscure, and there is not one of them from which we are authorized to conclude that they are angels. In Ezek. ch. i. ver. x.; ch. x. ver. 2. the cherubim are represented as symbolical animals of the most fantastic forms. The cherubim of the propitiatory or mercy seat (Ex. xxv. 18.) are also symbolical figures, which throw no light upon the passage. It is often said, that God dwells or sitteth between the cherubim; Is. xxxiii. 14. Ps. lxxx. 1.; xcix. 1. &c.; but this image is taken from the form of the mercy seat, from whence God spake *between the cherubim*, Numb. vii. 89. From these passages, compared with Ps. xviii. 10. "He rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind," some authors have concluded that this word is a symbol of the mani-

festations of the Divine power, as well in the moral world as in the physical, and that the passage we are considering, might mean a violent tempest, accompanied with flashes of lightning, represented by the flaming sword. In the Hebrew it is *a flame of a sword which turned, &c.*, rendered *a flaming sword.* Luther, though he admits the *cherubim* to be angels, thinks that the flaming sword was flashes of lightning.* The most probable opinion is, that the expressions of this verse were intended to convey the idea of some remarkable natural phenomenon, by which God designed to inspire man with fear, and to perpetuate in his conscience the feeling of his guilt.†

* Cherubim isti in vita habuerunt non ferrum quo arcerent accessuros, sed lateat gladii versatilis, hoc est, fulgetrum seu flammam, qualis est fulguris, quæ incerta est et perstringit oculos. Habuit autem ista flamma seu fulgor hoc, formam gladii, quo movetur assiduò seu vibratur. Angeli isti semper emiserunt flammas quæ in omnes partas agerentur, in quas accedere possent.

† The name cherubim (כְּרוּב כְּרוּבִים) cannot give us any clue to the nature of these beings, because the etymology of the word is doubtful. Some suppose it to be compounded of כ denoting similarity, and the Chaldaic word רביא, a *child*, a *young man*, and think that the cherubim had the figure of a child. Thus Calvin and others.—On the other hand, the greater part of the fathers of the church, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, Augustine, Chrysostom, &c. think that the word כְּרוּב, signifies *great knowledge*, and they seek

its etymology in the two words כִּי *to know*, and רב, *much*. In fine, others compound the word of כִּי and בּ, and make it signify, *learned, wise*, a person of distinction. We may judge from the diversity of opinion which prevails, both with regard to the passages of Scripture in which the word *cherubim* occurs, as to the etymology of the word itself, how great is the uncertainty as to its real meaning.

FINIS.

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